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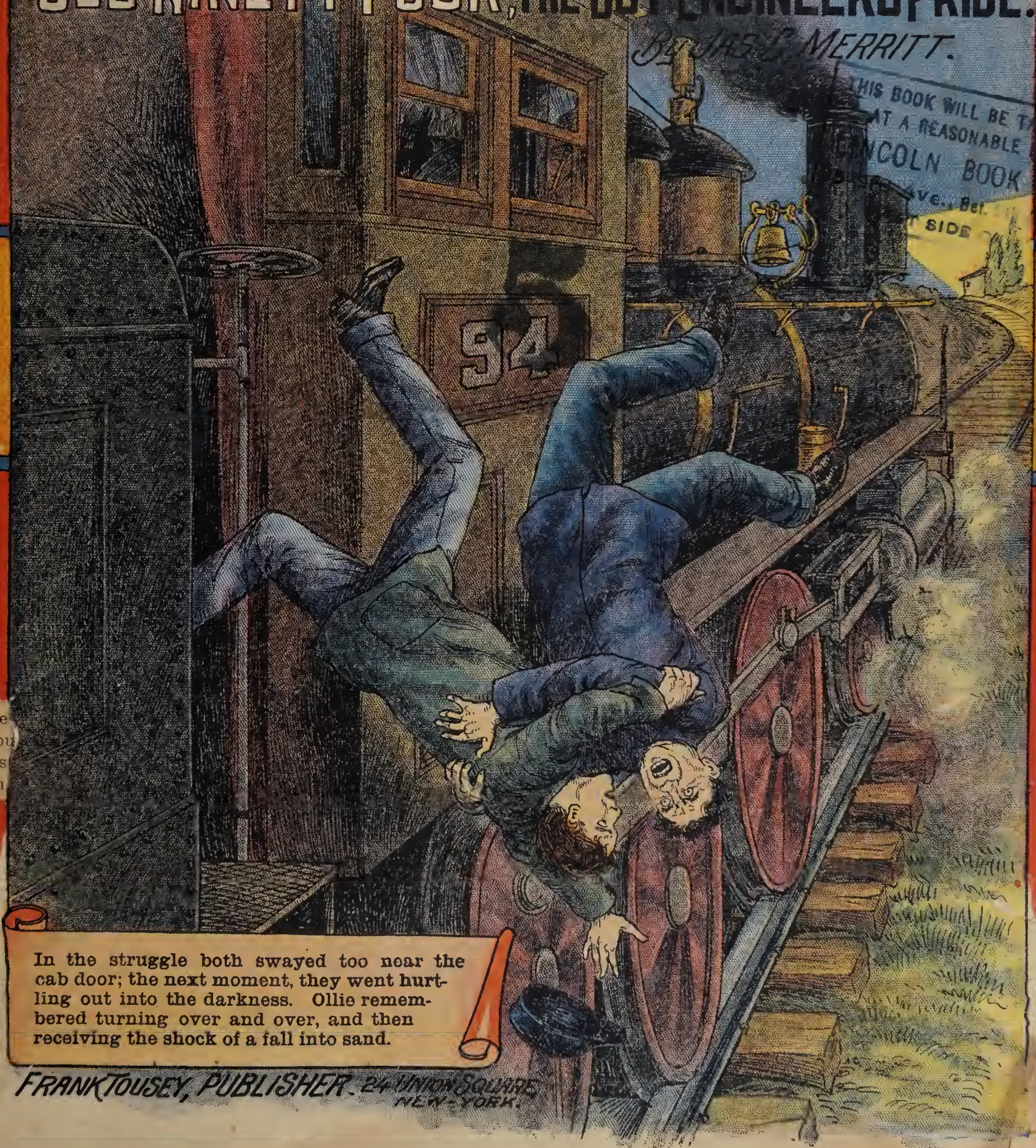
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# PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE.

OLD NINETY FOUR, THE BOY ENGINEERS PRIDE.

By JAS. C. MERRITT.



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# PLUCK AND LUCK

## Stories of Adventure

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NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 15, 1911.

PRICE 5 CENTS.

# Old Ninety-Four, the Boy Engineer's Pride

OR,

## LIFE AND LUCK ON THE RAIL

By JAS. C. MERRITT

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE OLD ENGINEER'S WARNING.

"It's going to be a foggy night," said old Jason Fuller, the veteran engineer of the Lakeside Express, the fastest train between the Western cities of Sterling and White Lake. "Do you know it's a mighty slippery grade beyond Black Divide, and though I've been over it hundreds of times and never an accident, yet, on my word I dread it to-night. I have a queer feeling that something will happen."

This startling declaration was made to Colonel Chipman, the president of the S. & W. L. road, who stood on the station platform beside the old engineer.

Old Ninety-Four, the truest and best engineer on the road, stood breathing and whispering on the track beside the two men. Jason Fuller and his engine were by-words on the line. Their fame was established and enduring as the hills about.

The young fireman, a mere lad of eighteen, though muscular and skillful, was in the cab waiting for his veteran mate. His name was Oliver Smart and he was the youngest employee on the road.

"You startle me, Jason!" exclaimed Colonel Chipman. "But I trust your fears are groundless."

"Oh, no doubt they are," declared the engineer. "But I tell you, driving an express train sixty miles an hour through a fog is no joke. There are phantoms and shadows ahead enough to ruin the nerves of the best man on earth. In a fog you can only go it blind and trust to luck."

"Well, it must require nerve."

"If you don't think so, just try it once. You see, the least shadow in front may mean a human life. Once I thought I saw the broadside of a house dead ahead and before I could realize what I was doing I reversed the lever, closed the throttle and set the airbrakes. But it would have been too late, even if there had been a house there, which there was not."

Jason was always full of reminiscences. He ejected his quid of tobacco and continued:

"Queer things happen to an engineer. Once I brought the train to a dead stop with the certainty that I had run over

a man. It was a misty night and I saw him step between the rails as plain as could be. When the machine struck him I could hear the dull crunch and the slight shock. I stopped and we ran back four miles to look for him. Not a trace of him could be found. What do you think of that?"

"Perhaps he was thrown to a great distance."

"Pshaw! There'd been some trace of him left. No, sir, it was all in my eye. There was no man there."

"Ugh!" ejaculated Colonel Chipman. "Such a thing would give me delirium tremens. You engineers must be men of nerve."

"It's one-half luck," declared Jason, positively. "Engineers are mostly fatalists. Now I am sure I shall know to a certainty when my last trip will be made before I start on it."

"Mercy!" exclaimed the colonel. "You are not foretelling it to-night, I hope? Look here, Jason, your nerves are unstrung. Don't go down the line to-night."

"Pshaw!" declared the old engineer. "That's all right. I wouldn't miss it. As for the train, don't mind that. I've a partner in the cab who can run Old Ninety-Four just as true as I can, and he is not twenty years old yet."

"Look here, Jason! You're not in good spirits. Let Oliver run the train to-night. You are hollow-eyed, man. Take a night off and sleep."

Just at this moment a gong struck in the station. It was the starting signal.

In an instant old Jason put a foot on the cab step. He emitted a discordant laugh.

"Good-by, colonel!" he cried, with a wave of his hand. "If I don't get through this time all right just look after Mary. See that she gets my insurance."

Colonel Chipman made a move forward as if to detain the old engineer. His face was white and startled. But he checked himself as he remembered that the old engineer had been long on the road and always faithful and to remove him now meant the wounding of his feelings.

The train rolled out of the station and plunged into the fog bank. The president of the road stood long on the platform looking into the mist as if he would recall the train. But he finally shrugged his shoulders and turned away.

"Ugh!" he ejaculated. "I believe Jason has been in the harness too long. His nerves are becoming affected. I will



try and induce him to retire on a pension. If he stays at his post much longer I fear there will be an accident.

Meanwhile the night express went thundering down through the fog.

Old Jason sat in the cab window with his hand on the throttle and his rugged face looking into the wall of mist ahead.

The boy fireman shoveled coal into the furnace and kept the steam up to a high mark. It was a fast run from Sterling to White Lake and the stretch of one hundred miles was done in less than two hours, as a usual thing.

There were but three stops. The rest was swift driving over long grades, around great curves, through a quarter-mile tunnel and over many bridges.

The S. & W. L. was a double track road, so that there was little danger of one train meeting another.

But there were plenty of other chances for disaster. It was a wild, rough mining country and sometimes trains were held up by road agents and many lawless acts were to be feared.

Every engine carried firearms in the cab. But through all his long service old Jason had seldom found occasion to use them. Once he had beaten off a gang of thieves and saved his train by backing away from an obstruction.

But on a foggy night like the present, were the road barricaded, there would be little chance for the poor engineer. Were a signal wrong or a switch carelessly left open there could be but one result.

How thick the mist was!

The headlight made not the slightest impression upon it. Nothing could be seen ten feet ahead of the engine.

Yet Old Ninety-Four fled through the wall of mist like a mad racehorse. She topped the grades and swung the curves as cleverly as ever. But a master hand was at her throttle and a veteran was guiding her.

Yet, when the boy fireman once glanced up at old Jason's face he gave a start of fright.

The old engineer's eyes were wild and staring, his lips were wreathed in a curious, demoniac smile. The expression of his face was fiend-like.

Oliver Small, the boy fireman, was a sharp, smart lad. He knew instantly that something was wrong with his mate. And it was true. Old Jason had taken one trip too many for his nerves.

"Why, Mr. Fuller," cried Oliver, as he placed a hand on the engineer's arm. "What is the matter? Are you ill?"

The touch and the voice brought the engineer out of what had seemed to be a stupor.

The effect upon him was thrilling.

With a sudden, convulsive gasp he turned and fixed his gaze upon the young fireman.

One look was enough to freeze Oliver's blood. He was astute enough to read the truth. The light of reason had fled from Jason Fuller's eyes.

He was stark mad!

A maniac had his hand on the throttle of the lightning express. A being swayed by the caprices and whimsicalities of a disordered brain had in his power the lives of two hundred human beings.

The mood might seize him to dash all into eternity; to push on at such speed as would derail the train. It was possible for him to do any one of a hundred horrible deeds.

And the crisis came when he heard Oliver's voice and felt his touch.

He turned his head and looked at the lad in a blank way. Then his eyes began to dance.

A horrible, insane laugh escaped him. His teeth chattered.

"We're going right through, Ollie," he cried. "We'll soon be in paradise. See? There the road winds up through the

hills into the valley of light beyond. Ha-ha-ha! See the red devil grinning on the track ahead there? I'll put on more steam and cut him in two. Ho-hi! Hip-hurrah! There he goes! I've smashed him."

With frenzy the mad engineer forced the throttle wide open. They were going down a frightful grade. Dull lights flashed in the fog. There was the clickety-click of switches and frogs and Ollie knew they were running past a station.

And no danger whistle had been given. The boy engineer's blood was slowly congealing with awful horror. What if a switch was open? What if a danger signal was out to warn them that the track was not clear?

Ollie knew that it was no use to try and reason with the madman. But in that awful moment the boy fireman taxed his mental resources for a plan. He tried a stratagem.

He had heard that insane people could be led by such means. But they could not be driven. Ollie's ingenuity came to the front.

He leaned over and said in a tense voice:

"Why not stop and see if we can't find the pieces of that red devil. Maybe we didn't kill him."

The point was won. The madman's gaze wavered, he half turned in his seat and then cried:

"Aye! That's the idea! Close the throttle. We'll go back and pick him up. Ha-ha-ha! I cut him right in two!"

With feverish haste he leaped from his seat and scrambled up the coal in the tender. It was Ollie's chance.

He instantly closed the throttle and set the air brakes. The whistle shrieked for danger, shrill and fierce.

With sharp jolts and jerks the train began to slacken speed. Down from the tender rushed the maniac, his eyes blazing with fury.

"The red devil will catch us!" he shrieked. "Open the throttle. We must put on all speed. Faster, faster, I say! Don't you see him? He is coming over the tender after me. Hi-hi!"

Oliver Small, the boy engineer, knew that the crisis had come. He was face to face with a madman. He must stop him. He must not be allowed to get at the throttle.

He stepped in front of the mad engineer and in a pacific manner tried to stay him. It was like pouring oil on a fire. With a fierce, murderous yell the maniac engineer sprang upon him.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE YOUNG ENGINEER.

Never in his life had Oliver Small faced such peril and such odds. The strength of the maniac was far greater than his.

But he closed with him resolutely and bravely. Then followed an awful struggle.

It all seemed afterward like a horrible nightmare to Ollie. The hissing of the steam, the grinding of the tires on the rails, the sharp, jolting and jerking of the train as it slackened speed, all was perfectly clear to his abnormally acute senses in that exciting moment.

He saw the steam dial and the chronometer, and then the black background of the fog beyond the tender rail as he swung about in his deadly wrestle.

Ollie was a child in the grip of the mad engineer, who lifted and swayed him like a puppet. But the brave young fireman clung to him like a panther.

And he gained his point. He kept him from the throttle, but in the struggle, both swayed too near the cab door and the next moment, with a horrid shriek, they went hurtling out into the darkness.

Ollie remembered turning over and over and then receiving the shock of a fall into flying sand. His hold on the mad engineer was broken and for a brief spell he was senseless.

But only for a moment. He came to suddenly, and, like



a flash, a comprehension of the whole affair came to him. He was unhurt and scrambled to his feet.

Sand filled his ears, eyes and nostrils, but otherwise he was at no discomfort. The lights of the train, which had come to a standstill, shone dimly through the fog not far away.

Voices were heard raised excitedly and lanterns were flashing. Ollie shouted with all his might. Then down the bank came the train hands and a score of the passengers.

"Why, what has happened to you, Ollie?" cried the conductor, Frank Hughes. "Where is Jason?"

Ollie drew a deep, shuddering breath.

"He is down here somewhere," he replied. "He went suddenly insane."

"Insane?" gasped Hughes. "You don't mean it, Ollie? Bring more lights, boys. Tell us about it."

Then, briefly and without any embellishing of his personal action in the affair, Ollie told the story.

The result was that he became instantly a hero in the eyes of all.

"Why, boy," cried one of the passengers, who was known as a millionaire and influential man in White Lake, "you have performed a heroic feat. You have saved the lives of fully two hundred people."

"He is a hero and shall have his reward," cried Hughes. "But before going further let us find the engineer."

The unconscious form of the engineer was found in the sandbank near.

He was bruised and bleeding, but not seriously injured. He was carried aboard the baggage car, where he speedily came to.

And then it became necessary to bind him hand and foot, so violent was he. Ollie meantime had gone back to the cab.

Old Ninety-Four had been brought to a stop just at the head of the most dangerous curve on the line. At the fearful speed she had been going there was no doubt she would have left the rails.

We will not dwell upon the encomiums profusely heaped upon the young fireman by the passengers. One of the brakemen went on as fireman and Ollie became engineer. The ambition of his youthful soul was realized, for he was henceforth to be the constant driver of Old Ninety-Four, his pet and pride.

Ollie took the express safely down to White Lake and also back to Sterling the next morning.

The telegraph had carried the news of his heroism all along the line and a great crowd was at the depot when the express rolled in.

The first to greet him was Colonel Chipman, who leaped into the cab.

"Ollie," he cried, rapturously, "the whole country is ablaze over you. I tell you, you have done a great thing."

"I only did my duty," said the boy engineer, modestly.

"You're a hero, I tell you. Come to the office."

Colonel Chipman had hard work to force a way through the cheering crowd. Once in the office he turned and faced the brave young engineer.

"Besides saving all those lives, Ollie," he declared earnestly, "you have done me a great favor. What do you want? Name your dearest desire?"

Ollie stood irresolute and abashed.

"I—I ask nothing," he said, but with sudden thought continued, "unless I may be allowed to run Ninety-Four."

"Is that all?" cried the president. "Well, you may be sure that so long as you desire, nobody else shall ever run that locomotive. She is yours."

"I can ask no more," said Ollie, moving toward the door.

But before he reached it a pleasing thing happened. There was a rustle of silk skirts and a faint realization of what

was coming dawned upon the boy engineer. From a corner of the room where she had sat unobserved a young girl, sweet-faced and charming, came forward.

"Wait a moment, Oliver. Allow me to congratulate you."

"Bessie—Miss Chipman," stammered Ollie, with red face.

"Not Miss Chipman to you. Call me Bessie just as you used to when we were schoolmates."

Bessie Chipman, the daughter of the president, smiled and held out her hand. Ollie took it like one in a dream. To him Bessie Chipman was a creature hardly of earth.

"I think you did a very brave thing, Ollie," said Bessie, frankly. "I could have expected nothing less of you."

"I tried to do my duty," stammered Oliver. "I thank you very much. You are both very kind."

"There, there, my lad," said the bluff colonel in his most genial fashion. "You deserve it all. I shall keep an eye on you. Be sure you'll never need a friend while I live. By the way, how is your sister? I hear that you are thinking of having her visit a specialist on blindness in New York."

"Oh, yes," cried Ollie, eagerly. "I am sure to do that now with engineer's pay."

"That you will, my lad, and if you wish to send her right away, I will advance you the money," said the colonel.

"No, no; that will not be necessary," replied Ollie, quickly. "I thank you for the kind offer. But Lucy is not yet strong enough. It will be months yet."

"I shall call on your sister Lucy very soon," said Bessie, warmly. "I am sure she must be a good sister."

Oliver's bosom swelled. His eyes held a strange light as he replied:

"She is very dear to me, for she is the only relative I have on earth. If I can restore the precious gift of sight to her I shall be the happiest person in the world."

Colonel Chipman and Bessie for a moment were unable to speak. The young girl looked warmly at the boy engineer and Colonel Chipman coughed slightly and said:

"Ollie, you have my best wishes for success and happiness. Be brave in your duty and you will succeed."

"I thank you both," replied the young engineer. "And now, good-by."

The door closed behind him. Colonel Chipman glanced at his daughter. There were pink spots in Bessie's cheeks.

"Bessie," said the railroad magnate, "I like that boy. He has got the right stuff in him. Depend on it, some day he will make his mark."

"I always felt sure of that," said Bessie, in a low tone of voice.

When Ollie left the railroad office he went straight to his home. A year before his mother had died. Mrs. Small had been for ten years a widow. Her resources had been slender, but she had kept Ollie at school and cared well for Lucy, a sweet girl, who had been stricken with total blindness at an early age.

After Mrs. Small's death the little home had been presided over by a faithful old domestic, Mrs. Harlow, who was as kind to Lucy as an own mother.

Ollie was in high spirits as he approached the little cottage. He was thinking of his bright prospects and of the things made possible by his pay as engineer. He could see the expression of pride and confidence upon the sweet face of his little blind sister, even before he entered the cottage.

"Oh, Ollie," said Lucy, rapturously. "Is not that grand? You are an engineer and the pay you will receive will enable us all to live with the assurance of keeping our home. Would that mamma were alive to see this day."

Ollie kissed his sister and then, with exuberant spirits, he cried:



"Just think of it! Old Ninety-Four, the best engine on the road, is mine."

"I knew you would succeed," cried Lucy, joyously, and Mrs. Harlow placed her arms akimbo and cried:

"Shure, it's glad I am from the bottom of me heart. Shure ye deserved it all."

"But think of poor Mr. Fuller," said Ollie, with sudden thought. "Is not that a dreadful thing? I am so sorry."

"Will he not recover?" asked Lucy.

"I fear not, Puss. Ah, it is so with life. What is one man's loss may be another's gain."

Mrs. Harlow spread a hearty meal for the young engineer, of which he partook. Then he sprang up, saying:

"Now, I know you will all excuse me. I want to go down to the roundhouse and see about shining up Ninety-Four."

A few moments later Oliver was on his way to the roundhouse. As he passed down the street he met many friends, who congratulated him upon his pluck in saving the express.

Finally he turned into a side street and saw the roundhouse just ahead. And now a peculiar incident occurred.

A street boy suddenly darted out of a drinking saloon. After him dashed a foppishly dressed young man, with a cane in his hand. His face was contorted with anger.

"Here, you young scamp!" he yelled, "come back here or I'll break your back!"

The lad slipped and fell. The next moment his pursuer was upon him.

The cane rose and fell savagely and the screams of the lad were painful and frantic. The young fop seemed insane in his anger.

Ollie's blood boiled. He saw that it was a very brutal thing for the boy to thus maltreat a child. He acted wholly upon the impulse of his chivalric nature.

With one leap Ollie was in the street. One hand was laid on the fop's collar and he was pulled away from his writhing victim. Howling with rage, he struck Ollie once with the cane.

The next moment the young engineer snatched it from his hands, broke it in a dozen pieces and scattered them in the street. Then the two faced each other. Ollie gave a start of keen surprise and exclaimed:

"Jack Warner! Is it you?"

### CHAPTER III.

#### OLLIE MEETS HIS RIVAL.

For a full half minute neither Ollie nor Jack Warner did aught but gaze into each other's eyes.

At school they had instinctively been boyish rivals in sport and for the favor of pretty Bessie Chipman.

Warner was the son of Horace Warner, who was a millionaire and a large holder of stock in the Sterling & White Lake Railroad.

Jack Warner was a petted and pampered child, but for all this one of the most unpopular young men in Sterling.

For this he was altogether to blame. Overbearing and surly, he was never civil or friendly to anyone.

Therefore it can be imagined that interference in his vengeance upon the small boy by Ollie Small was a most unwelcome thing to him. It aroused all the fierce passions of his being.

"What?" he roared. "You—you dirty coal shoveler! You dare to lay hands on me, a gentleman?"

Ollie was very cool and determined. He knew that right was on his side.

"Do you claim to be a gentleman, Jack Warner?" he asked, quietly. "Is bullying a mere lad like that the trait of a gentleman?"

"I'll show you," howled the young ruffian, as he pulled off his coat. "Why, I'll teach you manners, you cur!"

Ollie folded his arms and fixed a keen, steady gaze on Warner. "Better not," he said, very calmly. "You know how it used to turn out at school."

"What do you mean by meddling with my affairs?"

"You were cruelly beating one very much smaller and younger. It was my duty to interfere."

"Was it? Then I'll take one bigger and give you a thrashing. Oh, you may think you can handle me now, just as you did in school. But I was soft then, and hadn't taken boxing lessons from Tiny Tim, the prizefighter."

Warner leered savagely at Ollie as if to frighten him. But the young engineer was immovable.

"You can't scare me, Warner," he replied. "I advise you to go along about your business and let small boys alone hereafter."

"You're afraid," scoffed the young aristocrat. "Well, take that for the first biff."

He struck Ollie in the cheek with his clenched fist, leaving the blue marks of the knuckles there. By this time men had come pouring out of the saloon and from the stores near.

But as usual no policeman was in the vicinity.

Ollie's face smarted with the blow. He drew a deep breath. He did not lose his temper, but was cool and steady. Warner danced before him in the style taught him by the pugilist.

But Ollie made no account of this. He sailed into his antagonist swift and clever. Blow parried blow and for a few moments it was a hard fight.

But Ollie's superior strength and quickness counted.

Suddenly he countered and caught his antagonist on the jaw. Warner went down in a heap. All the sand was taken out of him. He did not rise, but lay cursing and threatening on the pavement.

"I'll get square with you for this, Ollie Small. We'll see how long you'll run Old Ninety-Four. You'll be kicked off the payroll for this. My father owns the most in that railroad. Don't you forget it."

Ollie shivered and grew pale. He saw that this might not be improbable.

He knew Horace Warner as a man of narrow ideas, selfish motives and a sullen, revengeful spirit. Horror seized upon the young engineer as he thought of the possibility of now losing his position, upon which he had staked so much.

He grew strangely sick at heart. But his bravery did not desert him. He started away toward the roundhouse without another word. Young Warner shouted epithets jeeringly after him.

Ollie went into the roundhouse and found his mate, Larry Fogarty, already on hand.

"Well, Ollie, I'm glad you gave that young cub a good thrashing," said the fireman.

"Did you see it?" asked Ollie.

"From a distance. You were right and he richly deserved it."

"Yes, but it may cost me dear," said Ollie, apprehensively.

"Eh? How's that?"

"You see, Horace Warner will be told of it. He owns a large share of the road and may insist that I be discharged."

Larry ejected his tobacco quid.

"Don't you believe it, lad," he cried, cheerily. "Old Colonel Chipman is on your side and he ain't going to see you fired after saving that express."

"Yes, if it rests with the colonel I shall be safe," said Ollie, plucking up spirit.

So Ollie and Larry worked all the afternoon shining up Old Ninety-Four. When six o'clock came both went home to supper.

After supper Ollie went up to the superintendent's office to



report. When he came out he passed Colonel Chipman's door. Just then he heard voices loudly raised.

One he recognized as the colonel's and the other Horace Warner's.

Every word came plainly to the young engineer's hearing. It was against his honor to play eavesdropper. Yet voices raised to the pitch of altercation held him and he was powerless to move.

"No, sir; that can never be," Colonel Chipman's voice was heard.

"What?" cried Warner, hoarsely. "You insult me in this manner!"

"I fail to see any insult."

"You do not deem it such to refuse the offer I have just made? Why, sir, I could pay no man a higher compliment than to propose my son's engagement with his daughter."

"And I reply that you could offer me no greater affront," retorted Colonel Chipman. "I have made no plans for my daughter's future. She is too young. In any event, I cannot entertain your son's name in that connection for a moment."

"You're a fool, Anthony Chipman!" hissed Warner contemptuously.

"Take care, sir."

"You don't know what you are doing. You forget that I own the controlling shares in this railroad. I can depreciate the stock if I choose by voting such measures as I desire and make your interest worthless. Stop and consider."

Ollie's blood tingled. But he was glad when he heard Colonel Chipman's grand reply.

"Such a threat, sir, is worthy only of its source and I do not fear it. Kill my interest in Sterling stock if you can. I have other resources."

"Then you refuse to consider my son's proposal for your daughter's hand?"

"Most emphatically, sir."

"This is final?"

"Yes."

There was the sound of rapid footsteps. The office door opened and Horace Warner, red-faced and choleric, came out. He pushed by Ollie without noticing him.

The boy engineer went down to the roundhouse.

It was time to draw out with the express. Larry Fogarty was already in the cab and had the furnace ready.

Ollie opened the throttle and ran out onto the sidetrack and coupled onto the express. A few moments later Old Ninety-Four was puffing and wheezing in the depot.

Then people crowded aboard, the baggage was loaded, the starting gong sounded and the midnight express pulled out into the dark night.

It was Ollie's first trip down the line as a full-fledged engineer and it was destined to be a memorable one, as some thrilling experiences were in store.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### A PLUCKY RUN.

While the express had been standing at the station platform in Sterling previous to the start for the long hundred-mile run, a man had come along the platform to the mail car, and stood locking back to the rear of the train.

He was dressed in frontiersman style, with cowboy hat, and long hair fell down over his shoulders.

At the rear of the train another of his style appeared. Slight signals were exchanged, but no one in the rushing throng paid any heed to these two strangers.

When the train drew out, however, one of the cowboys got on the rear car. The other had managed to step unseen upon the blind baggage next the locomotive tender.

Ollie sat in the cab window and watched the track ahead.

He displayed his best skill and was a master hand at the throttle. Very evenly and steadily the train ran. The grades were made smoothly and the curves swiftly and safely.

Ollie was right in his element. He let Old Ninety-Four race over the level and held her up at the sharp curves with great skill and dash. Larry Fogarty was deeply impressed.

"On my word, lad!" he cried, "I'd give all my old shoes if I could run a train like that. You're a born genius."

But Ollie laughed.

"That is stretching it, Larry," he cried. "You might do it better!"

"Not a bit of it," declared Larry, shaking his head. "I've not the cut to me. I can shovel coal better."

On into the night ran the express; mile after mile sped by. It was exciting, even thrilling, to drive a locomotive like Ninety-Four upon such a run.

Station after station was passed. The usual stops were made.

Then the express entered upon the long grade through the Black Divide. Here the high walls of the pass rose on either side.

Here was where Sam Dalton had been held up with No. 40 only a year previous, and lost his life at the hands of train robbers, who then rifled the express car.

Ollie could not help but think of this. But fear did not invade his breast. Only he leaned further out of the cab and kept a keen lookout beyond the limit of the headlight's rays.

If an obstruction was seen on the track he must check the train. But he had never yet seen anything of the kind. Perhaps he was thus made careless.

On and on boomed the train.

A thousand grim shadows flitted by; a million strange fantastic shapes showed across the pathway of light ahead.

Ollie was a stranger to fear or to superstition. Yet something like an understanding of the strange mania which had overcome Fuller came to him.

He shivered a bit. It seemed to him as if the old engineer was present in the cab with him, and the awful scene was being repeated.

Ollie drew a deep breath like a swimmer just coming up from a long dive. He understood at once that he must control his nerves. The effort was successful. He was not troubled again.

Deeper into the great pass the train hurled itself.

The shadows grew blacker and something of the roaring sound peculiar to a passage through a tunnel filled the air. Just then Larry Fogarty turned a startled face toward the young engineer.

"I say, lad, did you hear that?" he shouted across the cab.

"What?" asked Ollie.

"I don't know, but it sounded like a bullet striking against the furnace door. Look!" he cried, leaning down and picking up a jagged bit of lead.

Ollie came down from his seat with a start. He stared at the bullet and then at Larry.

"Somebody fired at us!"

"That's right! Perhaps they saw you in the cab window!"

"No," replied Ollie. "The bullet struck too low. It must have come from the rear."

Instinctively both glanced back toward the baggage car. But all was darkness and smoke there.

Overhead through the car ventilators in the dome lights flashed. But that was all.

Ollie did some quick thinking in that brief space of time. Then he reached a momentary conclusion that the dastardly shot had been fired by some person along the roadside. It certainly was a close call for both.

He turned back to his seat and had placed a hand on the



throttle when suddenly the gong in the roof of the cab rang sharply, the signal for a stop.

The young engineer knew then that something was wrong.

He closed the throttle and set the airbrakes. It was an up-grade, and therefore easy to stop the train.

Larry Fogarty threw open the furnace door to cool the fire for a moment. The light reflected blindingly backward against the pile of coal in the tender.

Ping! Ping!

Against the furnace rang sharply the clang of bullets. The two occupants of the cab were being fired at.

The shots were close, one cutting a bit of the rim from Larry Fogarty's cap. The aim, no doubt, was spoiled by the sudden blinding glare from the furnace.

Both Larry and Ollie acted with rare presence of mind.

They cast themselves flat upon the floor of the cab. Their assailant was on the blind platform of the baggage car, and had fired over the tender rail.

But now he could not lower his arm sufficiently to hit the young engineer and his mate. Moreover, seeing them fall, he was impressed with the belief that his shots were effectual.

"There are train robbers aboard, Larry!" cried Ollie. "It's our first experience!"

"You're right, partner," declared the young Irishman. "It's lucky we are that he didn't hit us!"

"He evidently meant to kill us."

"That's right!"

Old Ninety-Four had now come to a dead stop. Shouts and cries and a fusillade of revolver shots could be heard on the train. Ollie was about to rise and take his chances when Larry grasped his arm.

"Not on your life, partner," he whispered. "The spalpeen is coming over the back of the tender."

This was true.

A dark form breathing heavily was scrambling over the coal, and making its way down into the cab. Neither Ollie nor Larry, unfortunately, had the revolvers. They were hung up by their seats in the cab.

But Larry crouched like a young tiger in the coal. The train robber, blinded by the furnace, did not see him until he was almost upon him.

Then swift as a flash both Larry and Ollie acted.

Larry grabbed an immense chunk of coal and hurled it at the wretch. At the same moment Ollie sprang upon him.

Crack-ack!

The villain's revolver spoke, but the bullet went wide. The next moment he was prostrate on the floor of the cab with Larry and Ollie upon him.

The fall made the robber insensible, but Ollie cried:

"Give me a bit of rope out of the locker, Larry. We'll tie him up!"

This was quickly done. Then the young engineer and his mate had time to think of other things.

All this had happened in the merest space of time, so that none of the other robbers had as yet had time to reach the engine. Larry and Ollie quickly considered the best plan of action.

They leaned out of the cab and saw that a serious conflict was going on at the rear of the train.

It seemed that a half dozen of the gang of train robbers had been holding themselves ready in the rear car, in the disguise of travelers. The pulling of the rope to stop the train was the signal for action.

At once two men stationed themselves midway of the car with drawn revolvers. The others proceeded to hurriedly go through the pockets of the passengers.

Of course the train guards carried the news instantly to the

mail and baggage cars. There was money in large quantity there, and the mail clerks and baggage men were all armed.

Some of the passengers in the smoking car were armed, and they leaped out on the platform and opened fire on the robbers. The battle then became a pitched one.

The terrified passengers cast themselves upon the car floor to escape the flying bullets. Two of the passengers were shot. The others were driven back to the mail car.

Here the glass door was shattered and shots were exchanged through it. Unfortunately, though, the ammunition of the defenders, being short, began to give out.

The train robbers began to realize this, and pressed their way forward exultantly. The sequel would have been established in their favor but for an incident.

Of course the train robbers believed all the while that their man on the blind baggage had executed his work all right, while Ollie went back to see what was going on.

The young engineer reached the rear door of the mail car.

Here one of the clerks hurriedly described the situation to him.

"Unless we get aid at once," he cried, "we are lost!"

"Hold the fort," cried Ollie, earnestly. "Don't give up, and we'll save the train."

The young engineer rushed back to the cab.

"Quick, Larry!" he cried. "I must have steam, steam! All that Ninety-Four will bear!"

"All right!" cried the young stoker, with alacrity. "What is the plan?"

"It is thirty miles to Hazard City. If we can cover it in thirty minutes we can, I think, save the train."

"Hooray!" cried Larry. "I see the point, mate. Even if the spalpeens break into the mail car, they can't get off the train!"

And the young stoker fell to throwing coal into the furnace and making draught. Ollie opened the throttle and Old Ninety-Four started.

As luck had it, they had stopped just at the top of the grade.

Therefore, the momentum of the train was sufficient to give it unparalleled speed while steam was making. None who were aboard the train that night ever forgot that mad ride.

Ollie braced himself in the cab seat and opened the throttle wide. His hand was on the airbrake valve and he hung at times far out of the window.

The whistle pealed out shriek after shriek of warning. Down through the blackness of that inky night was launched that heavy express train like a bolt from the avenging hand of Jove.

Into the wall of blackness pursuing weird phantoms along the two lines of iron which kept reeling up under the wheels of Ninety-Four, hurling, whirling, hustling and shrieking its way through the night.

Over the grades, across bridges, around fierce curves, where it seemed as if the train must leave its tracks. The young engineer, however, knew what he was doing.

He steadied the train, balanced the curves and held her up to her speed all the while. It was phenomenal work.

At times he glanced at the chronometer. Then far away in a distant valley lights twinkled.

Ten miles more!

Thus far every mile had been made in less than a minute, and many times in fifty-five and six seconds. Nothing could be heard from the cars behind.

The young engineer and his mate had no means of knowing how things had resulted there. For aught they knew the train was in possession of the robbers.

But they hoped the defenders of the mail car had held out. However, this was proved a hopeless conclusion. Suddenly



Larry Fogarty dodged. A bullet struck the wall of the cab within an inch of his head.

## CHAPTER V.

### FACING AN ENEMY.

Instinctively the young fireman glanced back. It could not be that any of the robbers had gained the blind baggage, for there was no door in that end of the car.

But the young fireman thought of the car roof.

There was the explanation. Crouched on the dome of the baggage car were two of the robbers. They were drawing a line on the young engineer and his mate with their revolvers.

But the swaying of the train and the shadows made their aim uncertain. Bullets rattled into the cab.

Of course Ollie could not leave his seat. But he was in a measure protected by the corner of the cab.

But Larry grasped his revolver and pluckily returned the fire. It was not without effect.

One of the robbers gave a yell and nearly rolled from the car roof. He crawled back to the other end and disappeared. He was wounded.

The other speedily found that the position was too hot for him, and he also quit. Larry whooped with delight.

Mile after mile had sped by with incredible swiftness. The lights were growing near. The express boomed and thundered on furiously.

And now they were upon the last mile. The lights of the yard could be plainly seen.

Ollie knew that it would not do to make a slow stop, for the train robbers would leap and escape. It was necessary to stop also at the station where assistance could be summoned.

He studied the signals with something like alarm. He knew that he was running in ahead of time, and the track might be occupied by a switcher or even a special.

There was a red light—no, it was on the other side of the yard. Ollie drew a deep breath and sent Ninety-Four madly tearing down over the frogs and switches. He saw the lights all clear.

Mad whistle after whistle had aroused the whole yard, and engineers ran from all directions. To see the express go tearing into the yard at such speed half created the impression that she was running away.

Now Ollie saw the depot platform. He calculated the stop to a nicety.

He closed the throttle, set the airbrakes and even reversed the lever. The shock was intense, and passengers in the cars were thrown from their seats. The express slid along the platform track and came to a dead stop almost in its own length.

Of course the train robbers made a mad attempt to leap from the other side of the train.

But as they leaped down the steps they met Ollie and Larry with revolvers. Back of them were yardmen and switchmen, who had seemed to comprehend the situation.

All was quickly over. Only one of the robbers escaped.

Unfortunately he was the ringleader, but he did not carry away any of the money. In a jiffy the other robbers were made prisoners.

The scene which ensued certainly beggars description.

Passengers and trainmen surrounded Ollie and Larry. They were heroes in the eyes of all. The boy engineer had saved the train from being plundered of fully sixty thousand dollars.

The baggage and mail cars had been riddled with bullets. Fortunately none of the train hands or passengers were killed, though a number were wounded.

But previous to reaching the end of the Black Divide the train robbers had forced open the mail car door and robbed the pouches. They had secured a large booty, only to lose it.

As soon as things could be put to rights, the express went on its way and left but a little behind time. The rest of the run was made safely and without incident.

But the telegraph had carried the news to Sterling, and when the express in the early hours of the morning rolled into that town a large delegation was at the station to give Ollie and Larry a mighty ovation.

Colonel Chipman was one of the first to greet Ollie and congratulate him.

"That was great forethought, running the train into Hazard City," he declared, "and you did it in handsome style."

Ollie modestly murmured his thanks, and when the opportunity offered slipped away to make his way home. Just as he left the roundhouse Larry Fogarty called after him:

"Ollie, come back here a moment!"

The boy engineer retraced his footsteps. There was a serious expression on the young stoker's face.

"I just wanted to tell you," he said, "that the boys are all with you."

"What do you mean?" asked Ollie, in surprise.

"Well, if trouble comes to you, you can know that every engineer of this railroad is on your side."

"Trouble!" repeated Ollie. Then like a flash the words of Jack Warner came to him. His face flushed and then grew pale.

"Oh, I think I understand."

"Yes. I knew you would. You know, there's a story around that old Warner wants to fire you. Well, he'd better not!"

With this Larry stalked back into the roundhouse. Ollie's breast was full of appreciation of this sentiment, roughly delivered though it was. So he called back in low but sincere tones:

"I am grateful, Larry!"

As he walked away again on his homeward path his thoughts were serious. He regretted sincerely the trouble with the Warners.

He had gained the position for which he had worked so long, and was thrilled with the prospect of his immediately ability to send Lucy, his sister, to a specialist for the blind in New York. If her sight could only be restored, what a happy thing it would be.

But now it seemed as if the great end was to be snatched from him just at the point of realization. He knew that Horace Warner was vindictive and determined, and not to be lightly turned.

Young Jack Warner hated Ollie for the fact that Bessie Chipman had shown great friendship for the young engineer.

The president's daughter would not discriminate in the young nabob's favor against the humble engineer. In her eyes a man counted for his manly qualities.

So Jack Warner and his father were the foes Ollie had to reckon with, and they were not to be despised, either.

When Ollie reached home he was welcomed joyfully by Lucy and Mrs. Harlow. The news of the train robbery had already reached them.

"Oh, Ollie," said the little blind girl, with conviction, "I knew that my prayer was answered that harm should not come to you. And it was such a brave thing you did."

"Sure, it's a rare hero he is now," cried the admiring Mrs. Harlow.

"Thank you both," said Ollie, kissing Lucy. "I hope that fortune will not desert me."

With the acuteness of the blind Lucy perceived that something was wrong. While Mrs. Harlow was serving the boy engineer with his breakfast, Lucy drew it all from him.

Her indignation was great.

"I cannot feel any respect for such men," she cried, warmly.



"I am sure nobody will indorse Horace Warner in discharging you, Ollie."

The young engineer laughed at her earnestness in spite of himself.

"There, little Puss," he said, as he kissed her again, "never mind it. If I am discharged I will try again in some other place. My enemies cannot pursue me the world over, and somewhere there will be a place for me."

"Shure, there's none deserve it more," cried the faithful housekeeper.

Ollie donned his jacket and cap and started back to the roundhouse. But just as he was crossing the yard an office boy overtook him.

"I say, Ollie, old Warner wants you up to the office."

The young engineer turned. So Warner wanted to see him?

The blood tingled in his veins. Now that what seemed like a challenge had reached him he could not hurry fast enough to accept it. He would at least know his fate.

A few moments later he was at the door of the private office. Colonel Chipman was not at the station.

Ollie opened the door and entered. He bowed in a dignified way to a bald and dapper little man at the big desk.

"Did you send for me, Mr. Warner?"

The railroad magnate fixed his cold gaze upon the young engineer. For a full minute he did not speak.

Then he said:

"Quite a theatrical piece of work you did last night, Smart."

Ollie's blood leaped, but not a muscle quivered. He stood like a statue, looking blankly, stonily at his foe.

"Why don't you speak?" snapped Warner.

"I have nothing to say, sir."

"Oh, you haven't?" sneered Warner, laying down his pen. "We will see how talkative you can be under pressure. I presume that you understand your position on this road is held subject to my good nature, after the treatment you gave my son yesterday?"

"I still have nothing to say, sir," said Ollie, respectfully.

"Oh, indeed! Very discreet! But why did you maltreat and pound Jack?"

"I interfered, sir, because he was beating a small boy."

"Oh, you interfered, eh? I suppose that is your definition. Well, I think it will prove costly interference. Do you know what it means to incur the displeasure of a man of my power and influence?"

At this Ollie's eyes flashed.

"All men are born equal," he said. "And I fear no man for his wealth or his power. Not even you!"

"Impudence!" hissed Warner. "From this moment you are no longer in the employ of this road!"

Ollie bowed with dignity.

"Very well, sir," he said. "I had expected it."

"Oh, you had, eh?" gritted Warner, and then paused.

The door opened.

Colonel Chipman entered. He glanced from Ollie to Warner, and his fine face clouded.

"What is this?" he asked, quietly. "Is there trouble here?"

"I am discharged, sir," replied Ollie. "Before I go I will thank you for your kindness. I have tried to do my duty. Good-by."

Ollie's heart was quite full. He turned to the door. But Colonel Chipman's voice was like steel, as he said:

"Hold! Stay where you are!"

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE COLONEL THWARTS WARNER.

Horace Warner had arisen. His face was purple with anger. "Horace," said Colonel Chipman, in a rigid tone, "I am presi-

dent of this road. I claim the right to dictate to employes. It is my exclusive right."

"Dear me!" said Warner superciliously. "How we strut! Suppose you lower your feathers a bit. I have discharged this man."

"Then I hire him over again."

"You dare not!"

"I dare!"

"Look here, Chipman. You are writing your funeral oration. I am the controlling power in this road. I can set you down if I choose."

"I defy your power!" replied the doughty colonel. "I tell you, this engineer is going to stay on this line. I have given him Old Ninety-Four to run, and he is going to run it."

"I say he shall not! Moreover, I demand your resignation."

"Mine!" roared the colonel.

"Yes, yours, to take effect at the end of the quarter, which is to-morrow. You do not believe that I have the law on my side? Hickman, come in here!"

Warner snapped his fingers. From an inner office appeared a tall, spare man with ferret eyes. He was the legal counsel for the railroad.

A brief argument followed.

"Mr. Warner is right," declared Counsel Hickman. "According to the laws of this State the controlling interest in the stock of this railroad gives the balance of power. The road is in Mr. Warner's hands absolutely."

"But my interests—" began Chipman.

"They are in the minority. So long as the road is run properly and no stock watering or jobbing is tried you can say nothing and do nothing but collect your dividends."

"But I am president of the road!"

"Not now! Mr. Warner, as the owner of controlling votes, can depose you and elect himself or anybody else he chooses."

"But—my term of office——"

"Is at Mr. Warner's mercy. He can call for your resignation to take effect within a week."

"I demand it now," snapped Warner.

Colonel Chipman was silent for some moments. Then he turned and said very quietly:

"During the week I am then still president of the road, Mr. Hickman?"

The lawyer bowed.

"You are," he said.

"I have all rights and prerogatives just the same?"

"Up to the very moment your shortened term expires."

"Very well," said the colonel, as he turned to Ollie. "Mr. Smart, you are still engineer of Old Ninety-Four. You will continue to run the midnight express until you have further orders from me."

"I protest!" shouted Warner. But the lawyer shook his head. "Well," hissed the angry man, "I'll square accounts with interest when I get legal control."

"Until then have the goodness to wait," said Colonel Chipman, mockingly. "For one week, Ollie, you will run Ninety-Four. Do you understand?"

"I do, sir."

"Now," said Colonel Chipman, throwing the door wide open and removing his coat very calmly, "I ask you, Mr. Warner, to leave this office, and never darken its door again while I am president of this railroad."

"I have a right in this office," shouted Warner. But Hickman shook his head. The colonel had begun to roll up his sleeves.

Warner was a coward. He cared not to risk an encounter with the athletic colonel. So with a scowl he walked out. Once outside he blackened the air with curses.

Colonel Chipman shut the door. He went to the desk.



"Now, Ollie," he said lightly, "we are to run the S. & W. L. railroad for one week anyway. If I were disposed to be arbitrary I could make things unpleasant for that Warner as successor."

"Oh, Colonel Chipman," said Ollie, with feeling, "I am so sorry to have brought this all upon you!"

"You!" exclaimed the colonel. "Bless my soul! You are not responsible for it. The real trouble is that I will not consent that my daughter Bessie should become engaged to Jack Warner."

Ollie gave a sharp cry. Then his face flushed crimson.

"Oh, Colonel Chipman! He is not worthy of her!"

The colonel smiled.

"And he'll never get her!" he said. "So now, Ollie, go right ahead with your duties. Something may happen to change things in my favor before the week is out."

Ollie went back to the roundhouse. He told Larry of the affair. The young fireman was highly indignant.

"When you leave Ninety-Four, I go also," he declared. "I know we can get a position all right on the main line of the Union Pacific."

From that moment there was something in the air in Sterling. The depression was felt by the citizens of the town, as well as by the railroad people.

Warner kept away from the depot. He was biding his time.

S. & W. L. stock was quoted high on the market, and there was a marked rise in consequence of the outcome of the affair with the train robbers.

For two days Ollie and Larry ran the express through on time. No incident worthy of note occurred.

Then a great storm spread all over the country. It was a tornado of fearful violence, and caused great devastation.

The four o'clock express for Hazard City had just pulled out. Colonel Chipman stood on the platform when the telegraph operator came breathlessly out.

The wire to Hazard City was yet complete. The message was from the operator there, and said:

"TRAIN DISPATCHER, STERLING:—Hold No. 6, four o'clock and all trains but wrecking train. Bridge at Deep Cut is down.

"AGENT, Hazard City."

The four o'clock express was madly rushing to its doom.

## CHAPTER VII.

### A THRILLING RACE.

Colonel Chipman turned sick and faint as he read the message. He saw at once the awful peril of Number Six and the spot was plainly visible to him in his mind's eye.

Just before reaching Deep Cut Bridge there was a wide curve. No train could be here in time to prevent disaster if the bridge was down.

No message could overtake the flying train. There was no intermediate telegraph station. The message had come over a telephone loop line.

For a moment everything swam about Colonel Chipman. His soul grew sick.

He saw the train plunging into the abyss. He saw scores of dead and mangled people.

"Oh, my soul!" he gasped. "What can be done? Number Six must be stopped. But how—oh, how?"

Then a sudden, thrilling idea came to him. With him thought was action. Not a second did he lose.

Breathless and gasping, he started for the roundhouse. Ollie and Larry Fogarty were just cleaning up Old Ninety-Four. As luck had it, Larry had a full head of steam on for the purpose of blow out the boilers.

"Hello!" cried Larry. "Here comes Colonel Chipman. Something is wrong."

"Sure," cried Ollie. "Get ready, Larry. He wants us quick."

At the same moment Ollie swung back the roundhouse door and ran to set the switch onto the main line.

"Quick, for the love of heaven!" cried Colonel Chipman. "Catch Number Six. The bridge is down at Deep Cut."

That was enough.

The young engineer and his mate were too quick-witted to need more. They acted like a flash.

"All right!" shouted Ollie, and the next moment sprang into the cab. As if he thought he could render assistance, the president did the same.

Open went the throttle, Old Ninety-Four slid forward over the switches like an eel. It seemed a century ere she was out of the yard. But it was only a few seconds.

Once on the main line Ollie, to use a railroad term, "pulled her wide open." The brave engine responded like a bird. Away she sped.

Colonel Chipman, white and haggard, knelt beside Ollie and watched the track ahead. The young engineer now had a chance to show his nerve.

Of course Old Ninety-Four was not steadied by a train behind her. But she was one of those locomotives which run true and need little to balance her.

So Ollie did not hesitate to let her go for all she was worth. And such a ride none in the cab took before. Colonel Chipman never forgot it to his dying day.

He had faced the foe on a battlefield and had been in the hottest of the fire many times.

But never had he felt himself nearer death.

Old Ninety-Four swayed and pitched like a ship at sea and on the curves she seemed going to certain doom. But that steady, cool hand at the throttle and lever controlled her always and she stuck to the iron.

Faster and faster she fled over the grades. Mile after mile was covered at furious speed. Through deep cuts and tunnels, across bridges, past small stations. There was no time to signal passing switches, but Ollie kept the whistle going for a clear track.

And as luck had it at none of the stations was the track occupied or the main switch thrown off. The effects of the cyclone were to be seen on all sides.

Colonel Chipman's face was gray in its pallor. He anxiously listened for the answering whistle ahead which should tell him that Number Six was overtaken.

Allowing for the stops which Number Six would make on the down run, they should now be nowhere within hailing distance of her. Ollie knew this well.

So he leaned far out of the cab and studied the track ahead. He kept the whistle busy all the while.

It seemed as if those terrific shrieks and calls must be heard by the train rushing to its doom. Colonel Chipman gripped Ollie's arm.

"My boy," he said, huskily, "I fear we are too late."

But the boy engineer only smiled grimly and replied:

"We will catch her yet."

Down a long grade and around a mighty curve swept Ninety-Four. Suddenly Colonel Chipman drew himself up with a groan.

"Look!" he cried. "There are the hills of the Deep Cut. We are too late!"

"No!" cried Larry Fogarty. Look, there is smoke! Number Six has not reached the cut yet."

Ollie made a curve here and then opened the throttle wide. Then he pulled the whistle, once, twice, thrice. Again and again the danger signal went up.

For a moment the boy engineer's face was pinched and white. Then suddenly from the far distance came faintly the answering call.



"Toot—toot—to-o-oot!"

"Saved!" cried Colonel Chipman, joyfully. "Hurrah! You've done it, Ollie. You're a hero."

"Not I, Colonel Chipman," said Ollie, modestly.

"Why, I tell you, not another man on this line could have done this thing."

"Give the credit to Ninety-Four!" cried Ollie. "No other engine on the road could have kept the iron. I tell you she is a wonder."

Nearer now sounded the answering whistles. It soon was plain that the engineer of Number Six had heard and understood and had slackened speed.

Ollie let up a bit on Ninety-Four and in a few moments the long, winding column of smoke from the funnel of Number Six was seen quite near at hand over the ridges of land.

Then, rounding a curve right in Deep Cut, the local train was seen standing safely in waiting.

Ninety-Four gently bumped its nose against the rear of the train. Then Colonel Chipman sprang down and met the conductor.

"Why, Colonel, what is wrong?" he asked.

"Wrong?" exclaimed the magnate. "I tell you that you were rushing straight on to death. But you have been saved by Oliver Smart's keen work with Ninety-Four."

"I don't understand."

"The bridge at Deep Cut, not half a mile ahead, is down."

The conductor gasped and turned pale with horror.

"My soul! Is that true?" he asked.

"It is."

"Then, indeed, it is a close call from what would have been an awful tragedy, for we have a crowded train."

"Tell Stokes, your engineer, to pull down there. I want to see what damage has been done."

"Does White Lake know of it?"

"We got word from there in a roundabout way. All our wires are down."

The conductor now went forward and acquainted his engineer with the state of affairs. Then Number Six slowly pulled ahead.

When the closeness of their escape was made known to the passengers they were thrilled with horror. But they overwhelmed Ollie and Larry with gratitude and praise.

Rounding a curve, the Deep Cut approach was seen.

The bridge was a wreck. The raging torrent had carried away the central pier and the bridge had fallen.

Had Number Six plunged over the abutment into the river scarcely a life would have been saved. It was certainly a very narrow escape.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### A PLUCKY DEED.

It is hardly necessary to say that the passengers of Number Six train fully and deeply appreciated the narrowness of their escape.

They surrounded the cab of Old Ninety-Four and cheered Ollie to the echo.

The young engineer modestly acknowledged the demonstration. But he said to Colonel Chipman:

"Ought not some one to cross the river and set a signal in the track to guard against the possibility of a White Lake train coming down?"

"By all means," agreed the Colonel. "I did not think of that."

But the question now arose as to how the river was to be crossed.

The water was high and the torrent furious. No boat could cross in such a turmoil without being swamped.

But the iron framework of the bridge was elevated above the

surface of the stream, though the swaying of the structure showed that the pressure upon it was intense and apt to carry it away at any time.

Some of the hardiest of the crowd ventured out a little way upon this, but none essayed the entire passage.

In vain Colonel Chipman tried to think of some easy method for crossing. It was important that the danger signal should be set at once.

Thus matters were when Ollie and Larry Fogarty came down to the abutment. Ollie had coupled Ninety-Four to the rear of the train, so he felt safer in leaving the cab alone.

"Hello!" said Larry. "I don't see any trouble in going across there. Do you, Ollie?"

The young engineer critically surveyed the situation. Then he said in reply:

"I believe we could do it, Larry. We used to do greater things on a tight rope when we went to school."

"So we did, partner. Just speak to the colonel."

At this moment Colonel Chipman came up.

"Ah, Oliver," he said. "Can you suggest any method for crossing the river?"

"I think I can," replied Ollie. "Larry and I were just speaking of it."

"A swimmer could not live in that powerful current."

"Oh, no! I would not adopt such a method."

"What is your plan?"

"Why, climb over the superstructure of the bridge."

"Ah!" said the colonel. "Several have tried that, but they have not gone far. The frame seems likely to be swept away at any moment."

"A man could have been across by this time if he had started then," said Larry. "We are wasting time. If you say the word, Ollie, we'll try it."

Colonel Chipman looked dubious.

"I don't know about that," he said. "It's a pretty risky act. I don't want to lose my two best men."

"Pshaw!" said Ollie. "I don't think there is any danger of that."

"You don't really mean to try it?"

"Yes!" cried the boy engineer. "I know we can do it. Come on, Larry. We will take a long rope and tie it around our waists, leaving a distance between us. Then if we are swept into the current you can draw us ashore."

Colonel Chipman shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't like the risk," he said. But he was obliged to yield, for Ollie was in earnest.

When the project became known a silence fell upon the crowd. Everybody looked dubious. This, however, did not deter Ollie.

Lanterns and flags were strapped to the shoulders of the young engineer and his assistant. Then Ollie started out on the superstructure.

Very carefully and slowly he crept on over the iron framework. Larry was some little distance behind him. Colonel Chipman paid out the rope.

On they crept until well out into the middle of the stream. Here the bridge frame swayed and rocked violently.

Every moment it seemed as if it must be carried down into the depths. But yet it hung. The young engineer nimbly climbed along on the steel frame. Larry was right behind him.

And now two-thirds of the distance was made.

A deep breath of relief was drawn by the crowd. It was certainly a moment of intense joy. The young engineer and his brave assistant were sure to win.

Nearer and still nearer and they both nimbly climbed the opposite bank. The great feat was accomplished.



Ollie untied the rope from his waist and fastened the end to the abutment. Then both started down the track.

For half a mile they ran.

Then the flags were stuck into the sleepers between the rails and the lanterns were lit and placed beside them, with the red light turned up the track, for in a few hours darkness would be at hand.

"Heigho!" cried Larry. "We did it, Ollie. I'm all right. How are you?"

"First rate," replied Ollie. "Let us go back now."

Back to the abutment they went and the crowd on the opposite side cheered wildly. Ollie began to tie the rope around his waist again, when Colonel Chipman shouted:

"Ollie, my boy, had you not better stay over there? I wouldn't risk another passage."

Ollie looked at Larry, but the young Irishman said:

"I am willing to try it again."

"All right then," declared the boy engineer. "Come along."

Once more they found themselves on the reeling structure. Colonel Chipman paced the shore with most intense anxiety.

But fortune favored the daring young heroes and they crossed in safety. When they clambered up the bank they were fairly embraced by the crowd.

"Ollie," cried Colonel Chipman, excitedly, "you're a genuine hero, and, Larry Fogarty, you are the same."

"Ah, sir," said the brave Irish lad. "I only wish we were sure to stay with Old Ninety-Four, but I much fear that it'll not be long."

"So long as I have any voice in the affairs of the railroad you will," declared the colonel. But his voice did not ring true. The grave apprehension of his soul showed in his careworn face.

It was decided now to return to Sterling and leave the repairing of the bridge to the construction gang. In the meantime trains would be run as far as possible over a branch some miles below.

When Old Ninety-Four reached Sterling it was dark. A crowd was gathered at the depot, for news from Number Six had been anxiously awaited.

Scores of people who had friends on the train were in an agony of suspense, but now that they knew of their safety their joy was great.

Soon the train came backing into the depot. The details of Old Ninety-Four's great run were made known and the crowd made search for Ollie and Larry, the two young heroes.

But they had modestly got out of the way and were not to be found. Ollie went home.

But the event only added to the fame and popularity of the young engineer and increased the jealousy and hatred of his sworn foe, Jack Warner.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE STRIKE IS ON.

For a day or two, of course, trains could not run regular. A great gang of men were put to work, however, and by the last of the week a temporary bridge was stretched across Deep Cut.

Ollie ran Old Ninety-Nine on every night trip until Monday. It was just a week to a day, as Horace Warner had named the limit.

Then a startling report went through Sterling and the country about.

People were made aware of the fact that Horace Warner had been elected by a majority of votes represented by the stock acquired by that scheming millionaire as president of the railroad and Colonel Chipman was deposed.

It was an ugly rumor soon verified, for Warner was by no means as popular as Chipman had been.

Expressions of regret and even dismay were heard on all sides. But as Warner owned the majority of stock he could triumphantly elect himself.

That changes were to be made could not but be foreseen. The old employes already saw the sharp blade of the ax which was to sever their connection with the road.

Old speculators shrugged their shoulders and made a forecast of Warner's purpose. There was no doubt of his ability and his intention to curtail the expenses of the road and depreciate its stock, so that he might buy it at much less than par and thus control it.

Loud mutterings went through the town.

Monday night, as usual, Ollie went down to White Lake with the express. When he put Old Ninety-Four in the roundhouse he found a message there demanding his presence in the counting room.

Larry found the same. The young engineer and his mate proceeded thither.

The clerk pushed a pay envelope through the railing and said:

"You are discharged."

Ollie was too proud and too brave to show his disappointment. Both he and Larry made no protest.

They walked out of the office.

"Well, mate," said the Irish boy with an attempt at cheeriness. "It's hard luck, but I'm glad it's over."

"Well, so am I," said Ollie, truthfully. "We could have expected nothing less."

"Divil a bit. I think Warner will put Bill Huntley aboard Old Ninety-Four in your place."

"No, he won't," said a voice behind them. They turned with surprise to face a stout, good-natured man, whose eyes, however, blazed with indignation. It was Bill Huntley, a veteran engineer.

"Why, Bill," exclaimed Ollie, "is it you? I am sure I shall be glad to see you have Ninety-Four."

"But I tell you I'll never take the machine, though I'd consider it an honor under other circumstances. No, lad, this thing has been expected and been talked over by the Brotherhood of Engineers. You are one of the union. It's a piece of sheer malice and personal hatred. If old Warner don't put you back every engineer on this road will strike."

"No, no!" cried Ollie in consternation. "I won't hear to that. You shall not champion my cause."

"That ain't all," declared Huntley. "The old scoundrel has started out for trouble in the first place and he'll get it. Look at this."

Huntley held up a paper.

### "NOTICE TO EMPLOYEES:

"By order of President Horace Warner the employees of the Sterling & White Lake Railroad will submit to a reduction of wages of one-fifth in all departments after next full pay day. By order

"HORACE WARNER, President."

Ollie and Larry could hardly believe their senses. They looked across the railroad yard.

Knots of men were gathered about engaged in earnest confab. Even the very air seemed to hold a heaviness which could bode nothing but trouble.

"Why, what is he thinking of?" gasped Ollie.

"Only of himself, as usual," said Huntley, vigorously. "He is a mean, selfish old scamp. He means to grind the employees of this road, but he will find it a big job."

"I am afraid he will that," said Larry, with an ominous shake of the head. "It was a sorry day when Colonel Chipman went out of office."



"The result?" exclaimed the veteran engineer. "Why—a big strike!"

A short while later Ollie went home. He was welcomed joyfully by Lucy and Mrs. Harlow. He tried not to show dejection when he told them of his discharge.

Tears came into Lucy's eyes and her lips quivered.

"Oh, Ollie," she moaned. "And to think of their treating you so after the great things you have done."

"Never mind, little sister," cried the boy engineer, tenderly kissing her. "I shall soon find employment somewhere else. Of course I am sorry to leave the railroad, but I will find something else to do. This is a big world and there is surely room in it for us somewhere."

"Be me sowl!" cried Mrs. Harlow, vigorously. "If I had my way that old blatherskite of a Warner would be rode out of town on a rail."

This made Ollie laugh.

"With two such zealous champions I can have little fear of anything," he cried. "Oh, well, we will not look on the dark side of the matter yet."

Despite this resolution, Ollie slept little that night. The next day he walked down to the depot, with some curiosity to see what was going on.

As he drew near he heard the sound of loud cheering. A moment later he was in view of the railroad yard.

Across it in a solid body there marched the railroad employees. Not a train had left Sterling that morning.

Ollie kept aloof, but followed the crowd of strikers down the street to the depot. They lined up in good order on the platform. Delegates were sent in to interview Warner.

They came out hastily.

"There's no use," was the ultimatum. "The president of the road will not come to our terms."

A hoarse roar of disapproval went up from the crowd. Then they slowly dispersed. The great strike was on and its results were destined to be serious and far-reaching.

## CHAPTER X.

### CULMINATING EVENTS.

In his office Horace Warner paced the floor, his face swollen with fury and passion. The clerks cowered tremblingly behind their desks.

When the delegates from the strikers entered, he raved and swore at them fiercely. He utterly refused to treat with them and they departed.

"We shall see who will stand it the best," he stormed. "I can afford to hang out just as long as those accursed dogs. The idea of their dictating to me!"

"Why don't you squelch them, dad?" asked young Jack Warner.

"Isn't that what I'm doing, you graceless young cub?" roared Warner.

"Look here, old man," growled Jack, disrespectfully, "don't you go slinging hard names at me. If you do I'll make you sorry for it."

Warner's manner changed.

"I didn't mean it, Jack," he said, condescendingly, "but you know I'm all stirred up."

"Well, I ain't to blame for it."

"To be sure you're not."

"If you took my advice you'd settle the thing pretty quick."

Warner turned upon his son.

"What is your advice?" he asked.

"Give every one of them the fire."

"I have done it practically."

"Well, now, you can't run your railroad without men. But there are plenty you can get at the prices you name. Don't let the road lie idle."

"Where will I find the men?" asked the senior Warner.

"I'll find 'em for you," volunteered the son. "Any number of 'em."

"Will you?" cried Warner, eagerly. "Then you will have proved yourself a dutiful son. Now, Jack, my boy, you stick by me and you will not be sorry."

"I'll stick so long as you use me well. I have my rights," asserted the son.

"And you shall have them," affirmed Warner. "I am your best champion. I know the dearest wish of your heart and I mean to see it gratified."

Jack looked curious.

"What?" he asked.

"You are in love with that pretty Bessie Chipman."

Jack whistled softly.

"Well?" he asked. "What of it?"

"She shall be yours."

"Now you're talking business, dad. But can you tell me how to get her? Why, she looks more kindly even on that common-bred engineer than on me."

Horace Warner's face darkened.

"She does?" he hissed. "I've an awful antipathy to that young cub, Jack. I'll see to it that he never gets her."

"Will you, dad? Then we'll strike hands!" cried Jack, eagerly. "I hate the ground he walks on. There's nothing I'll not do to revenge myself upon him."

"I think we shall work together all right, Jack," said the elder Warner, with grim satisfaction. "I think when I put the screws on Chipman a little tighter he'll be glad to come to terms and turn his daughter over to you. In the meantime we'll get rid of every man on this road who is friendly to him. You must carry out your promise and find new employees to take the place of these strikers."

"I'll guarantee to do that, dad," cried Jack. "It's all settled."

Just then the office door opened. Colonel Chipman entered.

The genial colonel's face was grave and his manner was a mixture of surprise and anxiety.

"Ah, Warner," he said with relief. "I am glad to find you here. I want to see about this matter."

"What matter?" asked Warner, sharply.

"This strike. It is a most surprising and unfortunate thing. Can you explain it?"

The colonel and the new president looked each other squarely in the eye. In that moment they were instinctive foes.

"What is this strike to you?" snapped Warner, savagely.

"I am a stockholder in this road," replied the colonel, "and I protest against the policy of antagonizing the employees."

"Why, drat me!" cried Warner, furiously. "How dare you come into my office with such a statement? Take yourself out at once."

"Not until I have made you listen to reason."

"What do you call reason?"

"Withdraw the cut in wages which you have made."

"Never!" cried Warner, furiously. "I will see the road sunk first. In fact, I don't care how quick it sinks."

Even though sinking it ruins me," said the colonel, quietly.

"What do I care for you? You have always worked against me. Can't put on quite such high-toned airs, can you? My son is not good enough for your daughter? What a come-down!"

"You mistake, sir; there is no come-down," said the colonel, quietly. "If I lost all my stock in this railroad I would not yet be a poor man. In regard to your son, I agree with you. He is not fit to wed my daughter."

"Sir!" cried Jack, bounding to his feet.

"An insult!" hissed the senior Warner. "Remember, Chipman, you shall pay for that."



"I suppose you consider that low-born engineer a better match for your pretty daughter?" sneered Jack.

Colonel Chipman turned very coolly:

"I will not disguise the fact that I do," said the colonel. "Oliver Smart is quite as well born and bred as you, Jack Warner; though he is poor, I will wager my fortune he makes a smarter man."

"You insult me," gritted Jack. "If it were not for your gray hairs——"

"Don't let that thought restrain you," said the colonel, stepping back into the room. "If you wish to lay violent hands on me, you and your father both, I will not refuse you the opportunity."

The colonel's polite sarcasm caused a smile among the clerks, which fortunately for them the Warners did not see. It was well known that Colonel Chipman had been a famous athlete in his day. Despite his age he was still sinewy and supple and altogether a dangerous man.

Jack Warner's cowardice showed itself.

"I am not classed with pugilists," he said, loftily.

The colonel laughed contemptuously.

"I expected such a reply," he said. "Well, I give you warning of serious trouble if you persist in your present line of conduct toward your employees."

With this he left the office. For a short while after he had gone the two Warners remained silent. Then the senior Warner went to one of the clerks and directed the writing of some notices.

A short while later these words were posted about the depot:

**"NOTICE TO RAILROAD MEN:**

"Two hundred experienced men are wanted at once by the Sterling & White Lake Railroad Company. None of the present striking employees need apply for reinstatement, as they will be refused. Apply at once to the president.

"HORACE WARNER."

This notice was the most dangerous proceeding that Warner could have instituted. It was like waving a red rag in the eyes of a mad bull.

The mob of strikers and their sympathizers were greatly excited. A dull, sullen rumbling of ominous sort resounded all through the town. A fore-boding of evil was in the air.

The first act in the drama had been enacted.

The climax was near at hand.

**CHAPTER XI.**

**THE BOOMERANG.**

The next morning a dozen timorous men anxious for work applied at the railroad office. They were promptly hired by Warner and assigned their positions.

One of them was an engineer of limited experience. The others had worked in a railroad yard.

Warner gave the engineer orders to pull out Old Ninety-Four and hitch onto the White Lake day express.

"We shall hereafter run trains as per schedule," said. "I will place armed guards on each train. You will be perfectly safe."

The engineer selected a stoker from the squad of new employees. Then he started for the roundhouse.

Of course he met a number of the strikers. They halted him.

"Who are you?" was the query.

"My name is Harrison."

"Where yer goin'?"

"To get out an engine and take out a train."

"Don't you know that the employees of this road are on a strike?"

Harrison looked scared.

"Y-yes," he replied, "but I need work. Don't turn me away."

"You'll get work if you try to run any train out of Sterling," was the warning. "No scabs will be tolerated here."

Harrison finally plucked up grit enough, however, to get up steam on Ninety-Four, and, finally, without hindrance, ran six cars down to the depot. Warner was there and filled the train with waiting passengers.

But that was all. It did not pull out.

There was a rush through the depot and a line of men rushed to the yard switch. It was thrown open and the blows of sledges and chisel were heard.

Then up came sections of the track. If the express should go ahead she would be derailed.

Thunderous cheers went up on the air. The excitement was intense.

Warner rushed to the scene furiously. But he was powerless.

He swore and raved, but all to no purpose. The strikers had the best of the situation plainly.

"Curse you all for blockheads," he howled. "I'll call out the State militia and have you shot down for rioters."

In response to this threat three of the representative strikers came forward and said:

"You will have no trouble in running this railroad, sir, if you will use the employees fair and square. That is all we ask."

"Ah!" said Warner, sneeringly. "What is your definition of fair and square?"

"Restore full pay and take back all the old hands."

"Petty pass, where my employees are able to dictate my business to me," declared Warner angrily.

"We do not seek to do that, sir, but we have our rights. You have trampled upon them."

Warner sullenly retired to his office. There he remained for the rest of the day. No trains went out on the White Lake road.

Apropos of this a new feature presented itself. Merchants in the town made arrangements to ship their goods over a rival line, the Hazard City & Gulf Railroad. Before the week was out negotiations had been made for a charter to run a connecting line to Sterling.

One thing was certain, Sterling could not do without a railroad. If the obdurate president of the White Lake road saw fit to hold it idle as he was doing, then other parties must proceed to claim the franchise.

Matters were at a white heat in Sterling. The suspension of the White Lake trains was hurting local business and every man in the town was indignant.

There was even talk of high-handed proceedings. Such threats as the riding of Warner on a rail were circulated.

But the wily millionaire only smiled and nursed his wrath. "I'll bring 'em to terms," he philosophized. "They'll come to me yet and beg for their trains. I'll bring the stock down to a notch where I can buy it for a song."

There was no doubt but that the stock was falling. It dropped twenty points with the news of the strike. It was far below par.

But Colonel Chipman had not been idle. He had made personal visits to all the stockholders and adjured them to hold onto their stock.

"If you will sell it will be giving the road to Warner," he declared. "Stand by me and soon he will be compelled to quit his game of bearing down the stock. We will beat him."

As the other stockholders could afford to do this, being men of means, they accepted the colonel's advice. Despite its threatened downfall, none of the stock was offered for sale. Warner was surprised as well as discomfited.



"Curse them!" he gritted. "What are they hanging onto it for?"

And now Colonel Chipman played a new and shrewd game.

He knew that the most of Warner's wealth was in the railroad. The colonel himself could stand the complete loss of all his shares and yet remain comfortably well off.

So Colonel Chipman entered into a deal with the Hazard City line, which entertained the project of extending a branch road to Sterling.

The city government were exceedingly willing to grant the necessary privileges. One day a veritable bombshell fell into the Warner camp.

This was nothing more than a peremptory summons from the court to appear at a hearing, which was to show why legislative action should not be taken for the annulment of the White Lake franchise. This was within the discretion of the Legislature, for the provisions of the charter had been broken in the failure to run at least one full train each day over the line.

Warner was threatened thus with countless suits, which, if pressed, might mean his financial annihilation.

Astounded, the scheming millionaire hastened to secure counsel. But his lawyer only held up his hands helplessly and said:

"You have no case. You have made a horrible mistake. You should have kept to the terms of your franchise."

"But I could not," protested Warner, shrewdly. "The strikers prevented me with violence."

"That does not help you out," declared the man of law. "I see no chance for you but to quickly come to their terms and put the road in operation before further action can be taken. That may settle all grumbling."

"I will see them burned first," gritted Warner, savagely.

"Very well. If you can afford to gratify your spleen in this way you are at liberty to do so."

The railroad magnate grew sober. He began to see that his action had proved a veritable boomerang. It was a cheap revenge he was winning which reacted upon himself.

Thoroughly discomfited and malevolent, he returned to his office to consider the most graceful method of retreat. No way was offered to him but a complete surrender.

For hours he walked the floor. Suddenly the door opened.

Jack Warner entered.

His face was red and swollen and he walked with a rather uncertain gait. He sunk into a chair.

"Hello, pop," he exclaimed. "What's the matter with you? Anything wrong? You look blue under the gills."

Warner looked at his son with keen astonishment and horror. The lines upon his hard face grew deeper.

## CHAPTER XII.

### AT THE BALL.

"Jack," he said, sternly. "What is the matter with you? I smell liquor. Have you been drinking?"

"What of it?" asked the promising young scion, with a reckless laugh. "Don't you take a nip yourself once in a while?"

"Heavens!" ejaculated Warner, growing suddenly weak in the knees. "Has it come to this, my boy?"

Jack dropped a curse.

"What has made you so deuced virtuous all at once?" he asked.

"I don't like to see my son drink," said Warner, severely, "and I warn you never to touch liquor again."

Young Warner was silent. He was not so intoxicated as not to know that his father was in earnest. He stretched himself upon a sofa and fell asleep.

Warner Senior paced the floor a long while.

But this latest incident had lowered his courage even more. He set his thin lips tightly and reflected.

"I must make a small sacrifice to the enemy," he thought. "My time will come later. The next time I strike it will be to win."

The next morning notices were posted all about the railroad yard:

#### "NOTICE TO RAILROAD MEN:

"The management of the Sterling & White Lake Railroad have decided to restore the old schedule of wages and trains will resume their regular running time after this date. All old employees will be taken back. Per order.

"HORACE WARNER, President."

This created a sensation in Sterling. Public sentiment began to rapidly undergo a change.

"Well," was the general expression, "Warner thought it best to come to terms and that is where he is wise."

Of course the people welcomed the reopening of the railroad. All interest ceased in the construction of the new Hazard City branch.

In a troop the railroad men went back to work. They did not like Warner, but yet they were willing to work under the old terms.

All this while Ollie and Larry had been acting at the pleasure of Colonel Chipman. They could have obtained an engine on the Hazard City line, but the colonel persuaded them to wait.

And so, by waiting, they were enabled to again board Old Ninety-Four. It seemed a treat to once more step into the cab of the old locomotive.

"Ah, me boy," cried Larry, delightedly. "There's only one thing more I'd like to see done now."

"What's that?" asked Ollie.

"Sure, I'd like to see Colonel Chipman back in the president's office."

"That may come," said Ollie.

"It'll be a happy day."

Once more the boy engineer took the night express out over the White Lake line. Again he presented himself every week at the counting room for his pay as of yore.

But Horace Warner was seen little about the depot.

The general superintendent attended to all the business now and the Warners were seldom seen. A rumor went around that young Warner had grown wildly dissipated.

For many weeks things went on as regularly as ever. S. & W. L. stock went up again with a rush. The speculators were happy.

Once a year the railroad men were pleased to give a ball. The proceeds of this affair, which was usually grand and successful, always went to the fund for disabled and sick members of the brotherhood.

Everybody in Sterling was sure to attend and the occasion was always very enjoyable.

The time for this was at hand and Larry and Ollie had both been selected as aides to the floor manager. They were fine dancers.

When the night of the ball came people from everywhere flocked to the hall. It was gaily decorated and a fine orchestra discoursed excellent music.

Everybody was there except Horace Warner. Colonel Chipman and Bessie were on hand, the latter the belle of the occasion.

Jack Warner, with his ostentatious air, came up to Bessie and solicited a dance. Unfortunately for him he came late.

"I fear my order is quite full. Mr. Warner," demurred Bessie. "You may have a dance if you can find one."



Warner took the order and studied it a moment. He saw that every dance was taken. He saw that a waltz had been claimed by Ollie Smart.

A jealous light emanated from the young villain's eyes. He deliberately rubbed the name out with the end of his pencil and wrote his own in its place. All this was not noticed by Bessie.

"I have found just one spare dance—a waltz, Miss Chipman," he said. "I will be around to claim you later."

"Very well," replied Bessie, with dignity. Then she whirled away upon the arm of a partner.

Ollie was exceedingly busy with his duties as aid. Yet he did not fail to be on hand to claim his waltz with Bessie.

To his astonishment he saw her on the arm of young Warner. For a moment Ollie was staggered.

A half suspicion crossed his mind that this might be Bessie's choice, but the next moment he dispelled it.

"I beg pardon, Miss Chipman," he said, courteously, "but do I not have the honor of this dance?"

"Do you?" exclaimed Bessie, looking at her order. "Why, how is this? Your name is not on my order?"

"I wrote it there," assented Ollie, "and yours is opposite this dance on my order."

"Will you have the goodness to stand aside," said Jack Warner, pompously. "I have the pleasure of this dance with Miss Chipman."

"Not until the question is settled," said Ollie, quietly. "Kindly allow me to compare your order with mine, Miss Chipman."

Warner's name, though, is certainly opposite this dance."

Ollie took the order and was astounded to learn that this was true.

"It is very odd," he said, and then gave a start. He saw upon closer scrutiny the erasure. Like a flash the truth dawned upon him. He turned upon Warner.

"Did you erase my name and place yours there, sir?" he asked, in a steely voice.

"What do you mean?" asked Warner, hotly. "I am insulted."

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### INTO A TRAP.

It seemed to Ollie Smart at the moment of his discovery of this treacherous action of Warner's that he must lose all self-restraint and chastise the young villain, as he so richly deserved, on the spot.

He saw at a glance the gross deception which he practiced in substituting his own name for that of Ollie upon Bessie Chipman's order.

Bessie stood stupefied by the incident. She could not at once fully realize it.

"I am insulted," declared Warner.

"On the contrary, you have insulted me," declared Ollie, warmly. "I demand an apology and that you make the correction on this order. If this is a joke——"

"Joke!" hissed Warner. "I warn you it is no joke. This dance belongs to me."

"Do you deny that you erased my name as written here?"

"I do."

"Be careful, sir. Do not speak falsely."

"Dare you give me the lie?"

Warner raised his fist threateningly, but Ollie scornfully turned to Bessie and said:

"Miss Chipman shall decide to whom the dance belongs. Please examine your order, Miss Chipman."

"I am sure this is very distressing," said Bessie. "Ah, I remember very well, Ollie, that you claimed this dance," she flashed a glance of startled inquiry upon Jack. "But how does it happen that Mr. Warner's name is here?"

"You gave me permission to put it there," declared Jack.

"I certainly did not," said Bessie, drawing away from him. "There is every evidence that Mr. Smart's name was erased and yours put in its place."

"It is not true," protested Warner.

Bessie held the order up to the light. She could see plainly the outline of Ollie's name. Indignantly she flashed a glance of scorn at Warner.

"I refuse to dance with you, sir," she said. "The dance belongs to Mr. Smart."

Furious with his defeat, Warner turned upon Ollie.

"You shall not cheat me out of this dance," he gritted. "Take that."

With upraised fist he dealt the young engineer a blow in the face. Ollie partly broke its force with his arm. For a moment the young engineer towered above his rival as if he would crush him.

That moment was a highly creditable one to Ollie Smart.

He was justifiably angry. But the spirit of the true gentleman was his at command. He remembered his position and the presence of ladies. He controlled himself.

"This is no time or place to settle this affair, Jack Warner," he said, very quietly. "It shall be attended to later."

"If you are not too great a coward," sneered Warner, seeing his advantage.

Ollie gave his arm to Bessie.

"Allow me to escort you to another part of the hall, Miss Chipman," he said, solicitously. "I trust you will not hold me too deeply responsible for this incident."

"You are in no wise responsible, Ollie," protested the young girl. "Jack Warner has shown his true character, but there is no reason why we should lose our dance."

"Certainly not."

And away the charming young girl floated into the waltz with Ollie. As they danced she said:

"I think you will need to keep a very good outlook, Ollie. He is a very vengeful fellow."

"I do not fear him," said the young engineer. "But I am grateful to you for your kindly interest."

And the thrill which went through the young engineer's whole being spoke more than words. The two young people had begun to understand each other.

Otherwise than the incident just narrated, the railroad men's ball was a delightful success. Everybody had a good time.

The next day at the roundhouse Ollie narrated the affair to Larry.

The young Irishman spat on his hand.

"Holy Moses!" he ejaculated. "I don't see how iver you held your temper. If it had been me I'd smashed him if it brought the heavens down."

During the day, however, Ollie forgot the affair. But that evening, as he was crossing the street on his way to the roundhouse, a small boy thrust a note into his hand.

Surprised, Ollie stopped beneath a lamp-post to read it, as follows:

"TO MR. OLIVER SMART:

"If you are a gentleman you will answer this request in person. I will be at the end of the wooden bridge over White Creek at nine o'clock. We will need no seconds, so come alone, and we will settle the score in manly fashion. If you fail to come I shall know that you are a coward. Yours,

JOHN WARNER."

"Humph!" muttered Ollie. "Nothing could suit me better. I am more than willing to settle the question, Mr. Warner."

As it was hardly eight o'clock, it was too early to keep the appointment, so Ollie went on to the roundhouse.



The express did not go out till midnight, so there was plenty of time. White Creek was only half a mile distant.

Ollie helped Larry clean up and oil Old Ninety-Four.

All the while the young stoker noted that he was in an abstract mood.

"It's queer," he reflected. "Something is on his mind. I wonder what's up now?"

Larry Fogarty was a very acute lad. When Ollie finally looked at his watch and said, "it's a quarter of nine; I've an appointment at nine, Larry; I'll be back later," he knew that something was up. When Ollie left the roundhouse he left his packet in the cab and in the pocket was the note of appointment. Trivial as the incident seemed, it was the saving of his life.

Ollie hurried swiftly toward the wooden bridge. He hoped to be on time.

And it was not quite nine when he reached the appointed place. Nobody was in sight.

But presently steps were heard on the bridge.

Then a shadowy figure glided up and a voice said:

"Is that you, Smart?"

"It is," replied Ollie.

"You got my challenge?"

"Yes."

"Well, you did well to come. I thought you too big a coward."

"I think you will change your mind."

"Very good. There's a green plot down here by the river bank. We can settle the dispute there."

"I am agreeable."

Ollie followed Warner down a little decline in a wooded glade. Here Warner turned and faced him.

"You're in love with Bessie Chipman, are you not?" asked Warner, icily. "Well, I'll tell you that you will never win her."

"I have never dared to hope for such an honor," said Ollie, with dignity. "I object to her name being brought into this affair."

"Oh, you do?"

"Most certainly."

"What are you going to do about it?"

"Give you a well-merited thrashing," said Ollie, rolling up his sleeves.

Warner laughed boisterously.

"Poor fool!" he cried. "You little know what you have brought upon you."

A shrill whistle sounded. There was a rushing of feet about him. Ollie was conscious that dark forms were closing in upon him.

With the instinct of self-defence, Ollie struck out right and left.

But the next moment he was given a crushing blow which deprived him of life and light.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### JACK WARNER PLAYS A DESPERATE GAME.

Never in his career had Oliver Smart faced a more certain death. The swift rushing current of the river would have claimed his body but for an unexpected intervention.

When Ollie left the cab of Ninety-Four at the roundhouse Larry Fogarty was impressed with a queer presentiment.

He gazed after Ollie's receding form and muttered:

"It's a queer feelin' I have that he's going to danger. I've a mind to follow him, only for the meanness of the thing."

It was this compunction which restrained Larry, but it was short-lived.

As he went to stow away the oil cans in the cab he found a folded note on the floor. It had fallen from Ollie's coat pocket.

In a moment Larry had read the note of appointment.

A chill traversed the young stoker's backbone. It looked different to him.

"It's the divil's treachery," he muttered. "That black omadhaun wad niver dare meet Ollie in a fair fight. Shure what is done must be done quickly."

Down from the cab Larry sprang. In a few moments he had summoned four of the yardmen.

Armed with coupling pins, they set out on the run for the wooden bridge. They reached it just at the moment that Ollie was stricken down.

The light was not so dim but that the railroad men could see the figures of half a dozen ruffians closing in on Ollie. What followed was swift and thrilling.

Larry gave a yell, which made the place echo. Then the railroad men closed in to the rescue.

But the gang of would-be murderers did not stand their ground.

They vanished in the darkness like elusive shadows. Pursuit yielded no fruit. They made their escape.

Attention was instantly given to Ollie. He was unconscious from the blow he had received. Larry was beside himself with grief and wrath.

"Bad luck to the black omadhauns," he cried. "Sure they ought to be hung. They meant to murder him."

"That isn't so," said a sharp voice from the gloom. A tall figure appeared. In a moment Ollie's rescuers were upon their feet.

"Who are you?" asked Larry, sharply.

"I am Jack Warner."

Larry took a step half threateningly toward the young villain.

"You?" he exclaimed. "And you have the face to show yourself here? What do you mean by this treacherous job?"

"You are mistaken," said Warner, coolly. "It is something for which I am in no way responsible."

"You atrocious falsifier," cried the young stoker. "I have the treacherous note of appointment you sent to Ollie Smart."

"I met Smart here by appointment," admitted Warner. "We agreed to meet here to settle a quarrel we had."

"Yes, and arranged a trap to do him up," cried Larry, hotly. "I can tell you that you'll pay dearly for it, sir."

"It's not true," declared Warner. "I didn't hit Smart, nor do I know any more than you how it happened. We agreed to meet here and settle our quarrel in manly fashion. Just as we reached here, however, some roughs unknown to me pounced upon us. I escaped in the darkness, but they were giving Smart a beating when you appeared and frightened them away."

Larry and the railroad men were incredulous. But Warner stuck to his story. Of course it was not improbable and told it plausibly.

"I am in no wise responsible for this injury to Ollie," said the young villain, earnestly. "I regret it as much as you. I meant to thrash him in fair fight."

"Which you never saw the day you could do it," cried Larry, hotly.

"That remains to be seen," replied Warner, coolly.

"He isn't able to fight now," cried the Irish boy. "Ye can have a fight, though, if you'll take me for a substitute."

"I'm not fighting with you," retorted Warner. "I wouldn't soil my hands on such as you."

"Ye might do worse by taking one like yourself," declared the young stoker.

Warner was very angry. But he held his temper, for he knew that he was in rather a precarious position. If it could be proved that he had planned the trap for Ollie the result might be serious for him.

(Continued on page 20)



# Pluck and Luck

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## BRIEF, BUT POINTED.

A young lady, with a female companion a few years her senior, entered a crowded car in Cambridge, Mass. Two young men sat near them, and one arose and gave his seat to the elder lady; the other kept his place. His friend asked him—disguising the question, however, in German—why he did not give his place to the young lady. He answered, in the same language: "Because she is not pretty enough." After a little reflection, however, he, too, arose and surrendered his seat. The young lady took it, and thanked him—in German.

Capital punishment is still practiced in many countries, though of late years, especially in the United States, it has been made as humane as possible. That creation of the French Revolution, the guillotine, is still used by some countries, and the old executioner's ax deals out justice in Brunswick. The most humane method of execution, the electric chair, is used only in the United States. Spain employs the garrote, or iron collar, which is tightened until the victim strangles to death; and in Prussia the heads of prisoners are struck off with the sword. The guillotine is used in Bavaria and Belgium; and Russia destroys her criminals by shooting, hanging, and with the executioner's sword. The gallows is the official means of administering death in Great Britain; Austria has adopted the same means; but Chinese criminals are killed by the sword.

Platinized glass consists of a piece of glass coated with an exceedingly thin layer of a liquid charged with platinum and then raised to a red heat. The platinum becomes united to the glass in such a way as to form an odd kind of mirror. The glass has not really lost its transparency, and yet if one places it against a wall and looks at it he sees his image as in an ordinary looking-glass. But when light is allowed to come through the glass from the other side as when it is placed in a window, it appears perfectly transparent, like ordinary glass. By constructing a window of platinized glass, one could stand close behind the panes in an unilluminated room and behold clearly everything going on outside while passersby, looking at the window, would behold only a fine mirror or set of mirrors, in which the person inside remained invisible. In France various tricks have been contrived with the aid of this glass. In one a person, seeing what appears to be an ordinary mirror, approaches it to gaze upon himself. A sudden change in the mechanism sends light through the glass from the back, whereupon it instantly becomes transparent, and the startled spectator finds himself confronted by some grotesque figure that had been hidden behind the glass.

It is now possible to cut through highly tempered steel. A little pneumatic "pistol" hammer does the trick with the rapidity of a circular saw cutting through a piece of soft pine wood. What corresponds with the barrel of a pistol is really a cylinder in which a little block of steel slides up and down like a piston. The operator presses a little trigger and instantly the little block of steel commences to fly up and down, and every time it gives the chisel a sharp knock. A hammer like this will give hundreds or even thousands of blows in a minute. There are machines for cutting steel by electricity, but in these a combination of intense heat and force is employed. The pneumatic "pistol" cuts the steel cold, with as much apparent ease as a chisel cuts through wood.

## OUR COMIC COLUMN.

She—What is meant by the saying that a man is convalescing? He—That he has outwitted his doctor, I suppose.

Restaurant Guest—That's a very tender steak I got to-day. Waiter—Yes, sir, we've just had all the knives sharpened.

"Bridget, did you fix that sugar bucket so the ants could not get in?" "Yis, mum. Oi tuk th' handle off th' cover."

"In mid-ocean we met a magnificent private yacht flying signals of distress." "Leaking?" "Oh, no; their cook wanted to quit."

The Judge (sternly)—The next person who interrupts will be expelled from the courtroom. The Prisoner (enthusiastically)—Hooray!

Small Man—Well, how did the anniversary dinner go off? Big Man—Grand! There were only eight of us, and we had prepared enough for twenty.

Horried Old Lady—Oh, kind sir, think of your mother! Think of your mother! Burglar (sternly)—No use, lady, I was brought up in an incubator.

"Cook, is there any roast beef over from dinner this evening?" "No, ma'am." "Well, what is there left in the kitchen?" "Only the policeman, ma'am."

"What do you think of this tax on beer?" I think it is all right. By the time a man drinks enough beer to feel the tax he will be in a condition not to care."

"I object to that man on the jury!" shouted the lawyer for the defense. "On what grounds?" inquired the court. "I'm the man that persuaded him to get married."

First Member Musical Committee—Does the new soprano's voice fill the church? Second Member—Hardly. The ushers tell me there are always vacant seats in the gallery.

"That's the instructor in cookery." "Ah! Is she a practical cook?" "Practical? Well, I should think so! Why, she knows twenty-four distinct names for bread pudding."

Man (hurriedly)—Are you Miss Dawson, mum? "Yes." "Well, I've been sent to tell you that your husband's head has been broken, mum, and I'm to break it to you gently, mum."



## LOUISE'S HUSBAND

By Kit Clyde

On board the ocean steamer Ethiopia, bound to New York, I made the acquaintance—while taking my constitutional—of a rather quiet and gentlemanly personage, who told me his name was Jackson.

I had spent a number of pleasant half-hours with him before something he said gave me the impression that he was an English detective.

This fact I afterwards verified by asking a question, to which he gave a direct answer.

"Yes, I am a detective," he said, "and, sir, I hope your knowledge of the fact will not lessen your regard for me. There are many people who never think of detectives in any light except as thief-takers, and regard them as little better than the criminals they pursue. And yet many of them are very glad on occasions to get the skill and brain of the detective to come to their assistance."

I told him that the knowledge of what his profession was would not alter my feelings towards him.

In fact, his being a detective made the time pass more pleasantly for me, as I was deeply interested in his descriptions of detective life.

One of the tales he told me of an afternoon, as we sat on the sunny side of the smoking-room, enjoying a smoke, I have taken the liberty to relate, entitling it:

### LOUISE'S HUSBAND.

"As you must know, we have in England a larger percentage of crimes in high life than you do in the United States, and this because of the difference of our laws regarding inheritance.

"In England the eldest son usually succeeds to rank, and title, and estates, the younger children usually being all but allowed to shift for themselves.

"I shall tell the story from the beginning, relating the incidents in their proper order, instead of giving the results, and then telling you in detail of the tedious work I had to ferret out the truth.

"The family of Langdon was an old and comparatively wealthy one, and the name ranked among the best of the lesser nobility.

"Thomas Langdon had succeeded to the estates when twenty-three years of age, his father dying at that time.

"He married a year later, and just one year from the date of their marriage his wife presented him with twin sons.

"Now, it seems hard when you come to think of it, doesn't it, when you reflect that of these two boys, he who made his advent into the world just half an hour the first, was made wealthy while his brother would remain comparatively poor?

"Yet such is the law in England in such cases as this.

"The boys thrived, and grew up stout and sturdy lads, and, although twins, there was only a small resemblance between them, and even this much grew less as they advanced in years.

"And there was as much difference between Leon and Lewis, mentally and morally, as there was physically.

"Leon, the heir, was a good and true man. Lewis, the younger by half an hour, was wild and reckless, and at times a little sour. Perhaps he did not say so in words, but he begrudged his brother the inheritance and thought it unjust that the accident in precedent of birth should elevate Leon above him.

"He did not stop to think that he had younger brothers who

were beneath Leon, and that it would be impossible for all to have the heirship.

"Nor did he see or feel that he was jealous and sour, only because his mind was diseased from long brooding over this fact.

"True, his younger brothers seemed to enjoy life, but he could not, although he had more reason to than they, for Leon had told him that when he should succeed his father, he, Lewis, should have made over to him all the property that was transferable.

"While on a hunting excursion, Leon encountered and fell in love with the daughter of a country gentleman, recently deceased.

"Louise—that was her name—lived with a maiden aunt, whom Leon soon made friends with, as he brought her the highest testimonials as to character.

"Leon concealed his true station in life, and told Louise and her aunt that his name was Leon Mason, as indeed it was, being Leon Mason Langdon.

"He was twenty-five or six at the time, and his father had long wished him to marry—not to suit his inclination or his heart, but ally himself to some noble family.

"The maiden aunt sickened and died, and Louise was left alone in the world.

"Leon pressed his suit, and they were married soon after. But he dared not let his father know, and he and Louise lived quietly in the little country home.

"Thomas Langdon had been subject to fits of apoplexy of late years, and was liable to be taken off at any minute. I hardly think that Leon would have felt in any way but sad at his father's death; still, of course, he could not help looking forward to the time when he might bring his wife from her retirement, and openly proclaim the truth.

"Fate led the steps of Lewis to this quiet country place, and he caught sight of Leon and Louise.

"'She is my wife, sir,' Leon haughtily said, when afterward his brother made some sneering allusion to the rencontre.

"Lewis grew pale.

"His brother already married!

"He had hoped he might never marry, nor have children to succeed to the estates.

"'Your wife!' he exclaimed.

"'Yes. I am sorry to have you know it, but had rather you to know the truth than to suspect my innocent darling of anything wrong.'

"'Does father know this?'

"'No.'

"'Do you intend telling him?'

"'No. You know how the case stands. If you wish to make capital by telling him, you can do so.'

"'I tell him? No I have too great a sense of honor for that.'

"Leon bowed and the brothers parted.

"That same night a beautiful but abandoned creature, with whom Lewis was on very intimate terms, importuned him for a promised sum of money.

"He did not have it for her, and told her so.

"She saw that he had something on his mind, and wormed from him the secret of Leon's marriage.

"She had, to not a little extent, got Lewis into that sour condition of mind concerning his brother, and had fostered and bolstered up the idea that he was being unjustly treated, and rightfully he was as much the heir as Leon.

"And this had all been to advance her own interests.

"She wielded a great influence over Lewis, and was aware of the fact, and many a time she had wished that he was the heir.

"How she could bleed him if he were the heir!



"She thought over the matter as swiftly as only a woman can.

"She saw that a little capital might be made by informing Mr. Langdon, and drawing down his displeasure on Leon's head; and she urged Lewis to play the part of an informer.

"I wish Leon was dead!" exclaimed Lewis, in a bitter tone.

"Do you?" and the wicked woman's eyes flashed. "Why don't you see, then, that he does die?"

"He recoiled with a shudder.

"He understood her hidden meaning on the instant.

"I couldn't."

"Not for a fortune."

"Not for the title, and all those broad acres, and the continued love of myself? You know, Lewis, that I am human, and must live, and you have given me so little money lately that I am almost in beggary. Unless you do better, I must leave you."

"No—no; you must not do that!"

"Then make a bold stroke for fortune."

"He was a weak man.

"She did with him what she would.

\* \* \* \* \*

"A lady had come to headquarters to engage the services of a detective.

"It chanced that I was sent to consult with her, and she told me a simple, but touching tale.

"Her name was Louise Mason, and she lived in —shire.

"In the edge of the evening, just a week before, a knock had come to their door, and her husband had gone away for a walk with the person.

"Her husband had not yet returned and with pallid face and trembling lips, she told me that she feared harm had befallen him.

"Did she know the person who had knocked? No. Could she guess? No. Had her husband any known enemies? No. Did she suspect the manner of his death? No.

"It was just a pitiful 'no' to everything.

"The only suspicious thing was, she said, that on glancing up from a book she had been reading after her husband's departure, she had caught a glimpse of a woman's face pressed against the outside of the window-pane.

"She had caught but a fleeting glimpse of this face, but said she would know it again did she ever see it.

"Deeply interested, I went with her to her home. On conversing with her, I found her so surprisingly ignorant concerning her husband, that I carefully overhauled his personal effects, and made the discovery of his true identity.

"I went quietly and yet systematically to work, and at last discovered the dead body of Leon Langdon, with a bullet in his brain, just within the edge of a swamp.

"I kept my knowledge to myself, and permitted the body to be laid away in the graveyard as that of Leon Mason.

"Meanwhile Thomas Langdon, made aware of Leon's marriage, had at first wrathfully awaited his son's return. But when days passed and he came not, the father grew alarmed, and all his resentment was swallowed up in an intense anxiety concerning Leon's safety.

"Dressed in her widow's weeds, Louise came to the city with me, and day after day we walked the streets, hoping to see the face that had been pressed against the window-pane.

"I had no positive clew to work on, and was anxious to see this woman.

"One day she suddenly let go of my arm, as she muttered:

"I've seen him!"

"It was her husband's twin brother, Lewis.

"He was just about to enter a carriage containing a lady, they having just come out of the theater, after listening to an opera.

"I pretended to turn away, although I kept an eye on Louise.

"I saw her lay both hands on Lewis' arm and, bending forward, peer eagerly into the face of the lady in the carriage.

"Then she turned swiftly away, and reeled across the walk toward me.

"The upper half of her face was concealed by a thick veil, and I doubt if Lewis recognized her.

"Still the circumstance startled him, and springing into the carriage, he was driven rapidly away, just as Louise gasped:

"That was the woman!"

"Find your way to your hotel—I will see you to-night," I hurriedly said, and hastened after the carriage.

"At last the clew was in my hands.

"Lewis and this woman had gone down into —shire that night for the purpose of murdering Leon.

"Slowly but surely I worked up the case, until every link of a strong chain of circumstantial evidence was complete.

"Then I went to the stricken father, nearly crazed by the continued absence of his best-loved son, and I told him the truth.

"Hardly had I finished when Lewis came in, and at sight of me—a stranger—he turned pale.

"The old man's face was like adamant as he crossed the floor, and from a cabinet took a revolver.

"This he laid down within the murderer's reach.

"There is a revolver—end your miserable existence at once, or I'll see that a halter is placed around your neck. Shoot yourself now, or die like a dog as soon as the law, assisted by me, is able to perform its work. You can go!"

"I could say nothing—do nothing—and retreated.

"On hearing a pistol shot I hurried back, and found Lewis stretched on the floor—dead!

"His father was reclining and would have fallen but for my support.

"Thomas Langdon died that night, with Louise beside his bed.

"And Leon loved you!" he murmured. "I could have loved you, too. He has left no children?"

"No," said Louise, sadly.

"Then you will be the heir," turning to the next in point of succession. And see to it that our darling Leon's wife has all that she can want in this world. In the next she will have Leon and me."

"The woman who had egged Lewis on to the murder of his brother escaped the clutches of justice, but while hiding in a low and dirty neighborhood contracted a fever which hurried her into another—and for her, I must believe, worse—world.

"Louise to-day lives in the pretty cottage in —shire, a sad and sweet-faced woman awaiting the summons that will result in her meeting her dearly-loved husband."

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When Oliver Wendell Holmes sang the praises of the "burly, dozing bumblebee," which he described as an "animated torrid zone," it is likely that he thought of the insect as one peculiarly pertaining to warm or temperate climates. But the "yellow-breeched philosopher" is extraordinarily fond of cold climates. It seems to be the only kind of bee native to Alaska, as is evidenced by the experience of one entomologist who, in his search for bees among the Alaskan wild flowers, found only bumblebees. A picturesque incident attended Colonel Fremont's ascent of the great peak bearing his name in the Rocky Mountains. He thought he had left everything pertaining to the lower world far beneath him, when suddenly a bumblebee buzzed through the chilly air, and, to his astonishment, settled on his knee. Peary saw a bumblebee at the northern end of Greenland, and bumblebees are also common in Siberia.



(Continued from page 16)

But his crafty device of reappearing on the scene was likely to save him. Ollie was tenderly carried back to the round-house. A physician was summoned.

"He will not be able to run a locomotive again for a while," that worthy declared. "It means a rest of at least a week. He is suffering from quite a severe shock to the brain."

So Ollie was taken home. Bill Huntley took his place in Ninety-Four's cab.

The report of Ollie's injury went through the town. It aroused deep interest and sympathy, except in the household of the Warners.

"I suspect you were deeper in that business than you will admit," said Horace Warner to his hopeful son.

"Well, what do you care?" asked Jack. "You don't like him."

"I wish you had killed him," gritted the railroad magnate. "He is my worst stumbling block."

The days passed and Ollie began to rapidly recover. He chafed much at this enforced idleness.

But yet there were many pleasant things done to cheer him. Colonel Chipman and Bessie visited him every day. Bessie had taken a deep liking to little blind Lucy and the latter reciprocated it warmly.

Public sentiment was strong against Jack Warner. Few doubted that it was a premeditated attempt at murder, and there was talk of having the young villain arrested.

Jack Warner seemed all at once to strike a run of hard luck. He displayed his usual good judgment by going upon a lively spree.

In a very drunken condition he came home one night. When his father, very naturally, took him to task for it, he flew into a passion and threatened him with violence.

"What?" roared Horace Warner, thoroughly maddened. "You dare to threaten me, you graceless young scamp! I've a mind to disown you for this."

"Well—hic—go ahead, guv'nor," jeered the hopeful son, insolently. "I'm going to be an honor and a credit to you. Whoop! Ain't I a dandy? Ain't you proud of me?"

"You get out of here and go to bed," stormed the elder Warner. "If I catch you in this condition again I'll turn you out of doors."

Jack arose, half-sobered. His eyes gleamed in an ominous way.

"What?" he gritted. "You old hardshell. You dare to treat your only son like this? Give me some money and I'll get out of the country."

"I'll give you no more money," declared the elder Warner. "Henceforth you shall earn your own living. I'll teach you to insult your own father."

Jack Warner's eyes glittered with a vivid and dangerous light. He arose slowly and leaned over the table. As he did so he picked up a heavy inkwell.

"Do you mean that, guv'nor?" he hissed. "Are you going to treat your son like a dog? Going to cut my allowance down, eh? Going to turn me out?"

With a deep curse young Warner lifted the inkwell and hurled it with fearful force at his father.

It struck Horace Warner full in the brow. He reeled and fell flat upon his face.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE YOUNG OUTLAW.

It was a fearful blow which Horace Warner had received. He lay limp and motionless on the floor.

Jack had been actuated only by the deepest of anger and spleen when he hurled the inkstand. But the prostrate form of his father and the sight of the flowing blood sobered him.

He was frightened beyond expression at what he had done.

For Jack Warner was a natural and ardent coward.

"Jupiter!" he gasped. "I lost my head that time, dad! Get up on your feet. I didn't mean to hit ye."

But there was no reply.

The inanimate form never stirred. The blood was gushing out over the carpet in a crimson flood.

Jack Warner was frightfully pale and weak. He sank into a chair and with difficulty resisted faintness.

"Great heaven!" he whispered. "What have I done? I'll hang for this."

In his guilty mind at that moment there was not the least doubt that Horace Warner was dead. He was a murderer, to his best belief.

It was some while before he recovered in a measure. He was drenched in a cold sweat.

Then he had sufficient command of himself to make sure whether he had really killed his father or not. He bent down and turned the body over. The face was white, the jaw fallen.

Jack felt of the heart. He could distinguish no beat. Sick and giddy, he regained his feet.

"Oh, my soul!" he whispered. "I am a murderer! I have killed him!"

This became positive belief. He paced the floor like a wild man. A thousand plans surged through his brain. What should he do?

He knew that if he gave himself up to the law he would be hanged.

He could not do this.

The instinct of self-preservation was too strong. His crafty brain soon began to work.

"There is only one thing for me to do," he decided, "and I will do it."

He went to the door and listened. None of the servants were about. He went to the safe in the corner of the room. Here Horace Warner always kept large sums of money.

The door was open, for the magnate had just been to the safe as Jack entered. The young villain removed all the money packages and concealed them about his person.

Then he left the room, locking the door behind him. The hour was late when he quietly let himself out of the Warner mansion.

Jack made his way into the lower streets of the town. He paused before the entrance of a saloon, which even at this hour was ablaze with light.

He entered, and, passing the bar, he tapped on a small black door. He passed through it.

In a small room beyond two men were playing cards.

Both were roughly clad and had the appearance of frontiersmen. They looked up and one of them cried:

"Hello, Warner! What's the matter? You're as white as a ghost."

"I am a murderer! I have killed my own father!"

Both of the ruffians sprang up with such force as to upset the table. They stared at Jack.

"Are you joking?" one of them asked.

"No, Frisby, I'm not."

"Is your father dead?"

"He is."

Both ruffians whistled.

"Well," said the one called Frisby, "what are you going to do? Face it out like a man? Going to hang for it?"

"I would be a fool," said Warner, with a curse. "No, I've crossed the Rubicon and I'll not go back. I've killed my man. I think I have earned the badge of membership in your gang."

"Whew!" exclaimed Frisby. "I think you have. What do you think, Cartwright?"



"I agree with ye," said the other ruffian.

"Then you're elected. I knew you'd come into the fold."

"Now I'm ready to work that train-wrecking job any time you say," cried Jack, recklessly. "A life of outlawry is the life for me henceforth. Burn, pillage and destroy. We'll tear up the whole White Lake railroad and burn every town on the line."

Frisby and Cartwright shook hands with the young villain who thus committed himself to a life of crime. All three sat down to the table and gave themselves up to drink and conversation.

Frisby was the notorious leader of a body of bandits and train robbers.

He was one of the most daring of his class. For a long while he had exerted a pernicious influence over Jack Warner.

Jack had been fascinated by the Dick Turpin-like tales of the outlaw, but heretofore had deemed it better to enjoy his freedom and immunity from the law than to become one of Frisby's gang.

But now that his hand was stained with human blood, as he believed, he threw away all reserve and declared himself for crime and outlawry.

And that night he left Sterling with the two outlaws, riding away on horseback into the hills and retreats where the outlaw gang found a safe haven.

But there was one resolve uppermost in the young villain's mind.

He would wreak his vengeance upon Ollie Smart, the young engineer. He had given up all hope of winning the hand of Bessie Chipman by fair means. But there were other means.

Morning came and a thrilling report ran through the town.

It was rumored that Horace Warner had been found unconscious in his private room and that he lay delirious with brain fever from the effects of a blow upon the head.

The identity of the assailant was not known. The safe was open and had been robbed.

No suspicion rested upon Jack Warner for several days.

Then, after a fruitless quest for him, detectives were responsible for a theory that he was the assailant. This was verified by the statement of Horace Warner himself when he became conscious. Matters had reached a climax.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### A STARTLING RUMOR.

Horace Warner did not in any degree attempt to shield his son from the stigma of the murderous assault upon him. Indeed, his fury was almost maniacal and he could not control his expression of hatred of his unnatural assailant.

"He is henceforth no son of mine," he raved. "If you catch him hang him, hang him as high as Haman. He deserves no pity."

There were many who sympathized with Horace Warner, but there were others who would show that the murderous temper of Jack Warner was inherited.

The disgrace, however, was a serious blow to Warner. Even after he recovered and was able to resume his business duties he was much depressed.

He had set much by his son. It might be too much. That he was bitterly disappointed was certain.

Nothing was heard from the recreant son. If Jack had heard of his father's recovery he did not show that knowledge by coming home for parental forgiveness.

Ollie Smart was back again on the line and was making regular trips with Old Ninety-Four.

The boy engineer was in better spirits and particularly happy in the fact that he had money enough saved up at last to send Lucy to New York to the eye specialist who had affirmed his belief that her blindness could be cured.

"Oh, Ollie, my dear, kind brother," the young sufferer said, fulsomely, "you are so good and kind to me. If I get my sight I will devote my life to repaying you for it all."

"My dear little sister," said Ollie, tenderly. "Such a happy thing as the restoration of your sight will be worth more to me than all the world and I am more than repaid in the anticipation."

"But will it not be delightful?" said Lucy, rapturously. "You know I have never seen the trees and the houses and the birds and the sky. And above all to see the faces of my friends. Oh, heaven will be kind to me, a poor blind girl."

But Mrs. Harlow was perhaps the most confident and jubilant of all.

"Shure, me little darlint," she cried. "Ye'll niver fail to get your sight. The good Lord won't deny it, ye be shure of that. It's prayin' for ye I am?"

It was arranged that Lucy was to go down to White Lake on the express, Ollie's train.

"I wish it was possible for me to ride in the cab with you, Ollie, and see you drive the engine," said Lucy. "Perhaps when I return I may."

"Perhaps so," declared the young engineer. "I shall be very proud and happy to have you."

Just then the door opened and Bessie Chipman was announced by Mrs. Harlow.

"I thought I would run in and see you just a moment, Lucy," said Colonel Chipman's daughter. "I am going down to White Lake for a day or two. By the way, Ollie, I go on your train."

"Indeed," cried Ollie. "Lucy is going also."

"Is that so?" exclaimed Bessie. "How jolly that will be. But what a pity you cannot ride in the car with us."

"I shall feel proud and happy to know that I am driving the train and shall also feel an added responsibility. But Old Ninety-Four is staunch and true."

"I hope we will not be held up by train robbers," declared Bessie. "Do you know papa says there has been some talk about a rumor that a gang of them are in force in the hills about Deep Cut?"

"Oh, that is Frisby and his men," said Ollie. "Yes, I have heard of them, but I hardly think they will trouble us to-night."

"However, on his way to the roundhouse later Ollie felt not a little disturbed in mind.

Ordinarily he would not have given the matter a thought.

But as he remembered that the two who were dearer to him than all else on earth were on board and their precious lives in his hands, it was not strange that he should feel anxious.

He imparted this to Larry at the roundhouse. The young stoker whistled merrily and said:

"Well, Ollie, we'll give 'em a hot reception if they come."

"I wonder if we cannot arrange some sort of a shield in the back of the cab to guard against bullets," said Ollie. "We only escaped death by great good luck before, you remember."

"You are right," agreed Larry. "Now there's a section of old boiler iron over there. Let's see what we can do with it."

It did not take Ollie long to rig up a good defence out of the boiler iron. It was so arranged that it could be raised from the floor of the cab and thus protect the interior. It was a very clever scheme.

"I don't know why I am doing all this," said Ollie, with a shrug of the shoulders, "but somehow I have a feeling that we may be attacked by the train robbers again."

"There's nothing like preparation," averred Larry. "Shure we'll be ready for them, anyway."

"That we will."

Of late, since his experience with his son, Horace Warner had seemed to treat Ollie with more of respect, if not with actual favor. It was a remarkable change of sentiment.



It was not in his heart to ever forgive his son. At this moment he chanced to enter the roundhouse.

"Hello! What are you doing there?" he asked, sharply.

"We are arranging a defence in case of attack by train robbers," said Ollie.

"Oh, you are?" exclaimed the magnate. "Do you anticipate anything of the kind?"

"It is well to be always ready," declared Ollie.

With this Warner examined the ingenious device and expressed his approval.

"I hope you'll never have occasion to use it," he said; "but there are rumors that Frisby meditates an attack on some one of our trains."

"We heard something like that ourselves, sor," declared Larry.

"If there is any truth to the story it is possible that this may be the occasion," said the magnate. "For the express company will have sixty thousand dollars aboard."

Larry whistled. Ollie turned a bit pale and shivered.

"Now, I have told you of this that you may be on your guard," said Warner. "Stand by your engine whatever comes."

"We will certainly do that, sir," declared Ollie. "Have no fear."

After Warner had gone Larry said:

"Begorra, mate, it gives me a quare feeling in the knees. I'm shure that something is coming our way this night."

"Pshaw!" said Ollie. But in the next breath he resumed:

"If I were sure of it I'd have Lucy stay at home and I'd warn Miss Chipman to do the same."

Larry's jaw fell.

"Be they goin' down on the express to-night?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Whurroo! We'll have to go through, thin. I'll put extra guns in the cab and shure we'll niver surrinder to the enemy now."

And Larry was as good as his word. All preparations were made and it afterward turned out that this was wise. Neither the young engineer nor his mate could shake the premonition that something was in the air.

At the regular hour the express was ready at the depot platform and Ollie and Larry were in the cab.

## CHAPTER XVII

### A THRILLING RIDE.

Lucy, in charge of Mrs. Harlow and Bessie Chipman, was put aboard the train. Ollie left the cab just long enough to make sure of this.

He was pale and his face was drawn with anxiety. But he was not nervous.

He kept a close watch of all who were on the platform to, if possible, identify any of the outlaw gang. But he saw no suspicious characters.

Horace Warner came along to the cab. His voice shook a little as he said:

"There are some people who say I am foolish not to send an armed guard with this train, but I shall trust to you. I have confidence in you."

Ollie bowed and replied:

"If it is possible we will take the train through. At least we shall stand ready to give our lives in the attempt."

"Well said!" cried the magnate, rubbing his hands. "I may have been hard on you in the past, but I mean to do better in the future, Ollie Smart."

"I thank you," replied Ollie. "I appreciate the change of motive."

Then he turned to his seat. The starting gong rang.

Ollie opened the throttle and released the airbrakes. The express glided forward.

She was off upon the long two hundred mile run to White Lake. Out of the railroad yards and into the open country Old Ninety-Four sped.

It was a bright moonlight night. This was a source of much satisfaction to Ollie and Larry, for they could see the track far ahead.

The young stoker raked down the coal and heaved it into the consuming furnace while he sang rollicking Irish songs. Larry was always happy.

Ollie sat in the cab window and watched the track. It was a perfect night, the sky being cloudless.

It was a thrilling pleasure to the young engineer to hold the grand old engine down to her work over the line of glistening steel.

Every throb of her powerful frame, every thrill was felt by the young engineer and his spirit ardently responded. He thought of those in the train behind him whom he loved and the thought gave him courage to dare any danger.

On and on sped the train.

Up long grades steady and strong, down steep descents into valleys, through cuts, over bridges and around wide curves sped the express.

Far ahead the glimmering lights of a town were seen.

"We have made Hastings!" cried Larry, glancing at the chronometer. "We're a bit ahead of time."

"That's all right," agreed Ollie. "There will be need of it on the Highland grade."

As the train was an express, there was to be no stop at Hastings.

The red and white lights were now seen quite clearly. Ollie watched them intently.

He saw that the track was clear and then opened the whistle valve.

Down over the switches and frogs past the little station raced the express. People on the dimly lit platform saw the train go meteor-like by.

Then into the distance passed Hastings and once more they were in the open country.

The scenery now underwent a change.

The country became more rolling and just ahead were dark, high-capped hills. This was known as the Black Divide and several trains had been held up in the dark pass through which the railroad extended.

Ollie knew this and realized that a crucial moment was at hand. He leaned out of the cab and placed a hand on the airbrake valve.

Into the pass shot the train. Just a bit the speed was slackened. The moonlight was of no value here.

Little could be seen beyond the range of the headlight.

Deeper into the pass sped the train. Far overhead were the jagged heights. Engineer and fireman looked ahead expectantly.

But deeper went the train and every moment nearer the end of the pass. Five—eight—fifteen minutes and then the express shot out into the moonlight. All was over.

Their fears had been groundless. The train robbers had not materialized and Ollie drew a deep breath of relief. A great load was lifted from his mind.

But he knew that the danger was not yet over by any means. The Pass of Black Divide was not the only place favored by the train robbers. Deep Cut was ahead.

"By jingo!" cried Larry. "Shure I felt as if the omadhauns wud be in that pass fer certain, Ollie."

"I felt a bit nervous myself," said Ollie, "but it looks as if we had given them the slip for once. However, there may be trouble enough ahead."

"Right you are, partuer," cried the Irish lad, "but we'll give them a hot reception if they show up."



The miles now sped rapidly by. Through the different small towns the express sped and was always on time.

After a while they again approached hills and this time Ollie sat forward in his seat. Deep Cut was just ahead.

If they succeeded in safely passing this point all would be well. If the train robbers meant to hold up the express this would be the spot they would select.

Ollie thought of the money in the express car and a chill came over him. Yet he did not flinch. He was ready to meet death.

He remembered the circumstances of a hold-up some years before in this very cut.

Rails had been unspiked and the train had been hurled with a fearful crash into the rough walls of the cut. Engineer Hughes had been instantly killed and many of the passengers were maimed for life.

So the boy engineer might have been pardoned a slight terror as the train shot into the pass.

Suddenly Larry shouted:

"Howly mither! Switch off, Ollie!"

The young engineer's fingers were set and the whistle sent up a wailing cry of warning.

Just ahead the keen eyes of the young stoker had seen the debris of stones and earth which had been heaped across the track as an obstruction.

The next moment the nose of Old Ninety-Four was shoved deep into it. The airbrakes saved the train. Ollie had applied them just in the nick of time.

The train came to a very sudden and unceremonious stop. Passengers were hurled from their seats and glass was smashed in the doors and windows, but no worse damage was done.

Then from the locomotive cab Ollie and Larry saw dark figures coming down through the gloom, straight for them.

Revolvers gleamed and a loud voice shouted:

"Hands up! You are covered!"

Up onto the cab step sprang a masked ruffian.

"Whurroo!" yelled Larry. "Bad cess to ye, ye black omad-haun."

Seizing his iron poker, the young stoker dealt the invader a terrific blow over the head. He reeled and fell back into the darkness.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### A CLEVER STRATAGEM.

Nither Ollie nor Larry had the least idea of yielding. Bullets whistled into the cab and one drew blood from Ollie's ear.

But the young engineer seized hold of the sheet of boiler iron which he and Larry had provided for protection. Together they lifted it.

In a moment they had covered the cab entrance. Then they seized their rifles and opened a return fire.

Loud shouts and curses resounded through the night and the attacking outlaws fell back.

Ollie's wits were keen and his nerves like steel. He acted with great forethought and despatch.

Now that the foe were temporarily repulsed, he made a quick move to reverse the lever and set the train in motion backward.

The driving wheels slid and buzzed on the rails, but the train would not move. The reason for this was apparent.

The outlaws had foreseen the attempt and blocked the wheels of the rear car. The train was stalled.

Meanwhile the passengers in the cars were in a state of panic.

Such as were armed crouched in the bottom of the car and opened fire through the windows. But they were not at

once molested, for the robbers were after the express car and its treasure.

The express clerks now showed their courage in good fashion. They opened fire hotly and held the train robbers at bay. A terrific fusillade ensued.

The car was literally riddled with bullets. The attack on the locomotive had been abandoned.

Ollie and Larry had contested the point so pluckily that Frisby had called his men away to concentrate them upon the attack on the express car.

It was sixty thousand dollars he was after. Furiously he urged his men to the attack.

"We give thim all they wanted, bad cess to thim," cried Larry, triumphantly. "Shure I wish we could help the clerks in the express car."

"Something must be done," said Ollie, desperately, "or they will surely carry their point. Oh, if we could only run the train back."

"Thry it again," cried Larry. "Perhaps it will go this time."

Ollie put on all steam. But the driving wheels revolved until they smoked, yet the train stood still.

"They have placed some obstruction back of the rear car," said Ollie. "If it could only be removed—oh, I have the idea!"

"What?" asked the young stoker.

"Larry, will you stay here in the cab and when I pull the bell rope start the train?"

"W-what do ye mean?" asked the young stoker. "Shure ye're not going to leave the engine?"

"Yes."

"But ye are crazy? That would be sure death."

"No, not now. I don't think one of the outlaws has his eyes on the engine. They are engrossed in attacking the express car. It is as dark as a pocket here and they can never see me leave the cab. I will slip around in the shadows back of them and clear the obstruction away. I will then get onto the rear car and pull the bell rope. Do you understand?"

Larry gripped Ollie's arm.

"Arrah! Let me do that. It's not so much if I get killed."

"Nonsense!" said Ollie, sharply. "I want you to follow my instructions."

"If it must be so, sor, all right. I'll do that."

Ollie now thrust a couple of revolvers in his belt. He got down on his knees and crept onto the platform of the tender. He listened intently.

So far as he could see or hear not one of the outlaws was near the cab. He made a silent plunge down the embankment.

Like a dim shadow Ollie flitted along the base of the high wall of the cut. Once he passed very near a dim figure. At times bullets hit the wall of stone near him with a sharp ring. He was in some danger of being shot by his own friends.

But success crowned his efforts. He succeeded in safely reaching the rear of the train.

Not one of the outlaws was there to interfere with his purpose. He saw a pile of railroad ties under the rear trucks. At once Ollie began to swiftly and silently remove these.

The outlaws were yet trying to break into the express car.

Ollie threw the last tie and leaped upon the rear car. He gave the bell rope a violent pull.

The gong in the locomotive cab rang. Larry acted quickly.

Then a shriek went up from Old Ninety-Four's whistle and the train shot backward. Not a locomotive on the line could get under headway so quickly as Ninety-Four.

Back down the cut the train started, gathering speed every moment. Yells of rage and wild shots came from the outlaws.

Many of them clung to the platform and rushed into the



cars and pulled fiercely at the bell rope. Some tried to get back to the engine.

But Larry had no intention of stopping the train until a point of safety had been reached. Every moment speed was increased.

Ollie dashed into the rear car. It was the car in which he knew Lucy and Bessie Chipman were, and he saw them crouching terrified in one of the seats, as were the other passengers.

Bessie saw Ollie and gave a cry of joy and relief. The young engineer started down the aisle.

But just at that moment the door at the other end of the car opened and an outlaw, brandishing a pistol, entered.

He fired it once through the roof of the car, as if to intimidate the passengers. Then he rushed for the seat where were Bessie and Lucy.

He covered Bessie with his revolver and cried:

"Ah, you are mine now and nothing can save you. Do you know who I am?"

He tore the mask from his face. Bessie gave a shriek of fear. It was Jack Warner. The young villain's face was contorted with passion and evil triumph.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### A FINANCIAL CRASH.

There was no doubt but that Jack Warner was earnest in his belief that Bessie Chipman was delivered into his hands, and that her escape was an impossibility.

He saw her a prisoner in the den of the outlaws and forced to marry him. It was a moment of apparent triumph.

"Jack Warner!" gasped Bessie. "You, an outlaw? No, I will never go with you."

"You won't, eh?" hissed Warner. "We'll see about that. You are my prisoner. No person on this train can escape. There are twenty of our men on board."

Ollie Smart, with a revolver aimed full at the young villain's head, spoke these words. Warner turned with a curse and half raised his own weapon.

But he saw death in Ollie's gaze. Coward that he was he dared not ignore that. Dumfounded, he stood motionless before the young engineer.

"Give me that revolver!" said Ollie.

Silently the young villain passed the weapon over. His victory was turned to defeat. But yet he would not believe it.

"Humph!" he sneered. "That won't help you. There are enough of our men aboard to turn the tables. You will hang for this!"

"Before I hang you will have terminated your vile career," said Ollie, menacingly. "Your safety will depend upon mine!"

Then Ollie turned to one of the passengers, who, white-faced and trembling, had witnessed all.

"Tie this fellow!" he commanded. "Bind him to the seat. There is rope in the car locker."

Others of the passengers came forward and very quickly the prisoner was bound. To the dismay of Warner none of his colleagues came to his rescue."

The truth was, realizing their defeat, they had all leaped from the train and made their escape back into the hills. The train had now come out into the moonlit country and was rapidly nearing a small town.

The attempt of Frisby and his men had failed. The boy engineer had outwitted the train robbers.

Larry had done his work well. He kept the train up to a high rate of speed until out of the cut. By that time every train robber was willing to leap and when Larry slowed up for a curve they did so.

Jack Warner was the only prisoner taken, but no doubt an important one. From a deep cut the train ran back to Hazard

City. From here the news went by telegraph all up and down the line.

Once again Ollie and Larry came in for great credit for their heroic deeds. The money in the express car was saved and the express company insisted upon making them a present of five hundred dollars each.

To Larry as well as Ollie this was a small fortune and made it now more than ever possible for Ollie to send Lucy to an eye specialist for treatment.

Horace Warner was one of the first to come forward and congratulate Ollie upon his bravery. The railroad magnate's whole being was embittered against his son, who had so miserably disgraced himself.

"I shall not intervene in Jack's behalf," he said sternly. "I know he is my son, but he has done wrong and there is no reason why he should not be punished even as a man of lower birth. I cannot defend him."

Colonel Chipman was very hearty in his thanks to Ollie for defending Bessie. The Colonel said confidentially:

"I believe the conduct of his son will break Warner. He has taken it deeply to heart and has neglected many opportunities of late to better his fortunes. His stocks are listed on the downward market and a little panic might effect his ruin."

"In that case—what?" asked Ollie eagerly.

"His holdings of Sterling and White Lake stock would be thrown on the market and there would be a great tumble in prices. He would lose control of the road!"

Ollie's eyes shone.

"In that event," he cried, "would not the road come back into your hands?"

"If the shares should depreciate sufficiently, I think I could pledge enough to secure the controlling interest once more."

Ollie gave a cry of joy.

"Oh, Colonel Chipman," he cried, "if only such a thing could be. How I would like to see you back as president of the road!"

"Would you, my boy?" said the colonel with apparent pleasure.

"Indeed I would, and so would every man on the line!"

"Well," said the colonel very cautiously. "Keep very quiet and say nothing. Of course if Warner suspected that I had the resources to buy he would look out that the stock was not forced down any further."

"I suppose so."

"But if it goes below a certain point I will be able to buy and control."

"I will mention this to no one," said Ollie. "And I shall pray for it to come true."

Jack Warner was placed in jail to await his trial. He pleaded and begged at first for liberty and then grew sullen when he learned that his father would give him no help.

Ollie and Larry continued to run Old Ninety-Four and the night express. Frisby and his gang had vanished and it was reported that they had left the country for good.

Bright news came from New York, where Lucy was undergoing treatment. The surgical operation had proved a complete success and the surgeons reported it as more than likely that she would recover her sight.

This made Ollie very happy, and he went about his duties with a light heart. Mrs. Harlow was keenly delighted.

"Shure I've prayed to the Virgin day an' noight for the leetle gal," she declared. "An' I'm shure she will come out all right."

Matters went along thus smoothly for a time. Since Warner had acceded to the requests of the striking employees there had been no serious trouble on the line.

But underneath a powerful undercurrent had been at work



Villainy will prosper for a time, but when reverses come the end is sure and swift.

Colonel Chipman had very silently and carefully collected his forces. He had learned of a bear raid on the stock market. The bulls were to be victimized.

It was strange that Warner had not learned of this also. But he had been but little in business circles since the downfall of his son.

There was even a rumor current that he was very ill at his home. This was not confirmed, however.

A few days later the country echoed with the thunder of the financial crash. Sterling and White Lake stock went down ten points and later five points more in sympathy with other stocks.

But that was the bottom. It was too strong an investment to suffer total collapse. It was at this time that Colonel Chipman showed his hand.

He pledged his home and all he had in the world to buy Sterling stock. The result was that in two hours' time he had regained his former power.

He had secured enough stock to again hold control. He was once more the magnate of Sterling and White Lake.

That night, however, when he went home, surfeited with triumph and joy, he found a telegram.

Thus it read:

"Colonel Anthony Chipman:

"I wish you would come to my home at once. I am very anxious to see you. Come quick. Yours anxiously,

"HORACE WARNER."

No message could have been more unexpected to Colonel Chipman or have given him a greater surprise. He was puzzled to understand its meaning.

## CHAPTER XX.

### COLONEL CHIPMAN MAKES A PROMISE.

Beside Colonel Chipman that day in the stock exchange had stood his young friend and companion, Oliver Smart.

The hustle and hurry of the market, the inexplicable calls of the brokers and the general system was all an enigma to Ollie.

But he knew when Colonel Chipman's stock was bought and when the victory was won.

It is needless to say that his delight was very keen. As it chanced he was to dine at the Chipmans' that evening, so was present when the message came from Warner.

"Well, that beats me," exclaimed the colonel. "What do you make of it, Ollie?"

"What is it?" asked the young engineer.

"Read it."

Ollie did so. His astonishment was as great as the colonel's.

"Why, that is curious," he said. "Perhaps he wants to compromise."

"Well," said the colonel, "we will soon find out."

"Do you intend to answer it, papa?" asked Bessie.

"In person!" replied the colonel.

"Oh, I would not go alone," said Bessie, with apparent anxiety. "It might be a trap."

But the colonel laughed.

"I shall have my eyes open," he said.

"However, if you would like to go, Ollie. I would be glad to have you."

"Certainly!" replied the young engineer, with a glance at Bessie, whose face showed great relief.

It did not take long to get ready. In a few moments the carriage was at the door and Colonel Chipman and Ollie entered it.

They were driven at once to the Warner residence. At the door they were surprised to note another carriage in waiting.

At the door they were met by a servant who obsequiously bowed them in. Both Ollie and the colonel were aware of the odor of drugs.

But the explanation was quickly vouchsafed. From an adjoining room a bearded man appeared.

"I am the doctor," he said. "The patient is determined to see you, but I must caution you not to unduly excite him."

Colonel Chipman's face showed his surprise.

"What!" he exclaimed. "Is Horace Warner ill?"

"He is quite low," replied the doctor.

"Jupiter!" exclaimed the colonel in his energetic way. "That is why he was not at the stock exchange to-day. Ah, I will observe your instructions, doctor."

Both the colonel and Ollie passed through into a richly furnished bedchamber. Here on the bed reclined the president of the Sterling and White Lake Railroad.

His face was very flushed and apoplectic. He gazed at his visitors through glazed eyes. He held out his hand and took Colonel Chipman's.

"Chipman," he said, "you and I are sworn enemies, and no doubt you are surprised that I should send for you."

"In times of bodily extremity we are all friends," said the colonel.

"I know you're a good man, Chipman, and I'm sorry I ever quarrelled with you. My boy has been a great disappointment to me."

"I am very sorry, Horace."

"Yes, he deserves the punishment he will get. But, if he is convicted or not, it will be a matter in which I can have no concern now, for death is at my heart!"

"It's not so bad as that, Horace."

"Yes, I know. I cannot be deceived."

"Do not think it. You have a robust frame. There may be many years for you yet!"

But the sick man shook his head.

"This is my second shock," he said. "It is at my heart now. I shall die. It may seem strange that my last request should be made of my enemy."

"You are wrong," said Colonel Chipman. "I have no enmity for you, Horace. We have not always agreed, but I am far from being an enemy."

"At least I know you are an honest and merciful man."

"I try to be."

"Then you will not refuse me a last favor?"

"I will grant you anything."

"I thank you. I was sure of it. I know that you have won. The railroad is yours once more. Now, as I said before, I cannot defend Jack. Can I ask you to carry my message to him, and if he comes out of prison treat him kindly as you would ask me to treat your son?"

Colonel Chipman took Warner's hand.

"Horace," he said deeply and earnestly. "I will hold your request sacred. I will do all in my power for Jack. I am sure he will reform and yet be a credit to your name."

"I thank you," said the dying man. "That is all. Good-by."

"Good-by."

Colonel Chipman and Ollie, deeply impressed, passed out. The next morning the news broke upon the town that Horace Warner was dead.

Colonel Chipman, true to his trust, visited Jack Warner in his cell. As he entered the young villain sat on the edge of his cot.

He scowled at sight of his visitor.

"Well," he growled, "what has brought you here?"

"I come with a message from your father. Do you know the truth?"



"I know he's dead, and that's all," said the young villain. "I might feel worse about it if I knew he had been a father to me."

Colonel Chipman looked sternly at the youth. He could hardly understand so hardened a nature.

"For shame, Jack Warner," he said, sternly. "No boy could have had a more indulgent parent."

"I should say so. See how he has left me to die in jail."

"Perhaps you deserve it."

"Whether I do or not he ought to stand by his son."

"Stop and think how you treated him. You would have seen him murdered and robbed."

"Well, if that's all you have come here for you can get out. I'm not in the right state of mind for lectures," snapped Warner.

"I have not come here to lecture you," said Colonel Chipman. "I have come to offer my advice and friendship in accordance with a promise I made your father on his death bed."

Warner's eyes opened wider.

"The deuce!" he ejaculated. "Did you and dad make up?"

"He sent for me, and we buried all differences at his bedside. I promised to be a friend to you."

"You did, eh?"

"Yes."

"Well," said Warner tartly, "if you're my friend, get me out of here."

"Before I promise I want you to assure me of one thing," said the colonel.

"What is that?"

"That you will lead an upright life."

Warner whistled softly. Then he yawned, but finally said with sudden asperity:

"I'll promise on one condition. Agree to it and I'll be a man among men. I'll never step aside again. Your refusal once is what has made me so desperate."

"What is your condition?" asked the colonel.

"That you will give me Bessie's hand in marriage. I love her and I want her for my wife."

The colonel's lip curled with scorn and his frame quivered.

"That is impossible," he declared.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### A RISE IN LEE.

Jack Warner's face darkened.

"Ah, that's it!" he gritted. "I can see how you feel. You don't think I'm good enough for her. And yet you want to help me lead a better life!"

"Even if I were willing, Bessie would never consent," said the colonel.

"She will accede to your wishes. It will never be my wish."

"All right, then, the game is off. I am going to keep right on as I am. I don't care for the law nor you, nor my father's memory. I shall get out of here and when I do I'll make it hot for my foes. I'll have your daughter Bessie yet. If I can't get her by fair means I will by foul."

The colonel gave up the interview as a failure.

Certainly Warner was incorrigible. Yet the colonel remembered his promise and went to his lawyer.

"I want you to do your best to clear young Warner," he said. "Spare no expense at his trial."

The legal men were astounded.

"Public opinion is against him and it is the general impression that he ought to be punished, Colonel Chipman," they said.

"I know it," agreed the colonel, "and I think so myself. But I promised his father to defend him."

"Very well, sir."

Colonel Chipman was easily elected president of the rail-

road again and he was soon back in his old office. It was a welcome day to the employees.

They called upon him in a body and gave him an ovation such as only a popular man could expect. Ollie was very happy at the turn of affairs.

The Sterling and White Lake instantly began to boom. The business of the road increased.

Extra trains were put on and there was an improvement in the service. The project of a rival railroad died a natural death.

Thus matters were when one day Ollie received a summons to visit the president in his office.

As he entered, Ollie saw that besides Colonel Chipman the directors of the railroad sat about the office. The young engineer halted, half in embarrassment.

"All right, Ollie," cried the colonel in his bluff, easy way. "Don't be bashful. Come right in."

"What are the orders, sir?" asked Ollie quietly as he stood with cap in hand.

"The first order is, sit down."

Ollie dropped into a chair. The august assemblage of directors were constrained to smile, but the colonel brusquely proceeded:

"This gentleman is the young man in question," he said to the directors.

"Certainly a very honest-looking lad," said one.

"I have heard much of his prowess as an engineer," said another.

Ollie's ears tingled. The colonel saw this and smiled with grim humor.

"Yes," he said, "he is the best engineer on the S. & W. L."

"If you please, sir," said Ollie, in an undertone, "what are your orders?"

"To stay right where you are and listen," said the colonel. "You have made a splendid record as an engineer, Ollie. But don't you ever have aspirations for advancement?"

Ollie was now surprised. He could hardly understand the colonel's meaning. Unable to speak, he looked at him questioningly.

"I am very much interested in you, my boy," said the colonel seriously. "I am satisfied you have the making of a man in you. Now, I want an assistant manager of this road here in the office with me. Will you give up Old Ninety-Four to accept the position?"

For a moment Ollie was overcome. But he was not a poltroon. He was simply an ambitious, smart lad, and quick to grasp an idea and seize an advantage. The color mounted to his cheeks and he said in a clear, ringing voice:

"It is for you to judge of my merits, sir, and place me where I can be of the best use. I promise that I will try to do my duty."

The directors applauded this direct and manly answer. The colonel was very much pleased.

"Then, Ollie," he said, warmly, "we shall name you as assistant manager of this railroad. Your salary will be twenty-five hundred dollars per year. There will always be a chance for promotion. The general manager receives four thousand. That will be something for you to look forward to."

Ollie was for a moment stunned. The enormity of his rise in life would have turned the head of an ordinary youth. But as in the past he rose equal to the occasion.

With a modest bow he rose and made his speech of acceptance.

"Gentlemen and friends," he said, in a full, clear voice. "I am only a young man and you are reposing a great trust in me in tendering me such a responsible office, which is usually filled by one beyond my years. But nevertheless I mean to accept it with courage and confidence and to give you the ab-



assurance that I will do the best in my power to merit your approval.

"To the president I wish particularly to express my deep appreciation of his kindness and his generosity. I will never do anything undeserving of its continuance. This is all I can say just now."

The next morning Ollie reported for duty at the office. But as he entered Colonel Chipman came hurriedly in behind him.

"The whole town is up in arms. Last night a gang of highwaymen, probably Frisby's men, broke into the jail, killed the turnkey and rescued Jack Warner. He is again at large."

Ollie Smart could hardly believe his senses. The declaration of Colonel Chipman rang in his ears like a blast of doom.

"What?" he ejaculated. "Jack Warner escaped?"

"Yes," replied the colonel. "It is no doubt the work of Frisby's men. The jailer or turnkey was murdered."

"That will mean more trouble, Colonel Chipman. We must keep an eye on Bessie. That scoundrel will make his mark now. Also we must arm all our trainmen."

"Yes, I had no idea Frisby would try such a thing," declared the colonel, "but it is done. As you say, we must be on our guard."

All that day Ollie, in the pursuance of his new duties as assistant general manager of the railroad, worked like one in a dream.

The awful conviction that Bessie Chipman was now in danger was upon him. He could think of nothing else.

Colonel Chipman had received warning that the Frisby gang were going to wreck Ollie's train, and he made up his mind that something strenuous had to be done; so he had seen the city marshal about sending a party of vigilants along with the train, and the marshal promised to do so.

Ollie at once rushed down to the railroad yard. He made his way through the car shed to the roundhouse.

Old Ninety-Four, handsome and grand, a veritable monarch of the rail, stood panting and blowing in her berth.

Her brass work shone brightly and in the cab window shone still more brightly the genial face of Larry Fogarty.

In an incredibly short space of time the one hundred armed men called for were on hand. Then arrangements were made for giving the outlaws a surprise.

The vigilants were to hide in the bottom of the cars until the outlaws boarded the express car. Then they were to rush onto and surround them.

This was Ollie's plan and there seemed no reason why it should not work well. When all was ready Ollie went along to the cab and leaped up beside Larry and his mate.

The train sped out of Sterling and into the open country.

On rushed the train and Old Ninety-Four seemed to gather speed as she ran. It was a wonderful ride.

They rounded an abrupt curve and there, only half a mile away, was the lone station of Calvert.

Here mountain roads met and the mountain people drove down to the train to get their mail. It was a wild, lawless region and an illiterate people who dwelt in it.

A better place to hold up a train could not have been selected. It was a flag station and ordinarily a special would not have stopped here.

But Ollie saw the red danger signal set.

So Ollie set the airbrakes and softly and easily the train glided up to the station platform. Then Ollie saw that the switch ahead was open and had he kept on he would have been side-tracked.

Suddenly from the station and the sides of the cut there sprang half a hundred armed men. At their head were Frisby and Jack Warner. A terrible yell went up.

In that moment the train robbers believed that the special was at their mercy.

But the next instant their hopes were shattered. A most astounding surprise greeted them.

From the car windows were thrust rifle muzzles. Men poured out of the car doors armed with Winchesters.

Aghast, Frisby took in the situation. He saw that it was a trap. Dismayed and panic-stricken, Frisby's men tried to flee.

But the plans of the vigilants had been well laid.

The bandits were cut off from retreat up the pass by means of vigilants leaping from the rear of the train. These were instantly compelled to surrender.

Those who retreated into the station were captured.

It was a complete and overwhelming victory and a final defeat for Frisby.

The bandit chief himself was among the prisoners.

On the trip back to Sterling Larry held the throttle and Ollie gave him much praise for his skill. This pleased the young Irishman greatly.

When Sterling was reached an immense crowd was at the station. The reception of the vigilants with their prisoners was an exciting one.

But the happiest hour of Ollie's life was that evening in the parlor at Ingleside, Colonel Chipman's residence. The young superintendent had called to consult with the president of the road.

Colonel Chipman was out and Bessie came into the room. She went impulsively up to Ollie, saying:

"I want to congratulate you, Ollie, upon your splendid success and bravery in capturing Frisby and his gang. Papa has told me all about it."

"There is a greater victory which I hope to win and the prize is the fairest and dearest on earth. Can you guess what I mean? Shall I lose?"

One full moment they looked into each other's eyes. Then Bessie's whole soul went forth in her reply:

"The victory was won long ago and you may consider yourself an absolute conqueror. I unconditionally surrender."

When Ollie Smart went back to his office he was the happiest young man on earth.

He had chosen the path of honor and truth and it had brought him that which any noble-minded, upright young American lad is free to win, and sure to gain in this land of freedom, the assurance of wealth, a happy home and a true American girl for his wife.

Can we ask more for our hero, the young engineer of Old Ninety-Four?

Frisby and his men were justly dealt with by the law. The fate of Jack Warner was never known.

The Sterling & White Lake road is rapidly extending and developing into a great trunk line and wealth and honor and prosperity are all with Colonel Chipman and his young partner, Oliver Smart, erstwhile boy negineer of Old Ninety-Four.

Next week's issue will contain "THE TIMBERALE TWINS; OR, THE BOY CHAMPION SKATERS OF HERON LAKE," by Howard Austin.

**SPECIAL NOTICE.** All back numbers of this weekly except the following are in print: 1 to 25, 27, 29 to 36, 38 to 40, 42, 43, 45 to 51, 53 to 55, 57 to 60, 62, 64 to 69, 71 to 73, 75, 79, 81, 84 to 86, 88, 89, 91, 92 to 94, 99, 100, 102, 105, 107, 109 to 111, 116, 119, 124 to 126, 132, 139, 140, 143, 163, 166, 171, 179 to 181, 192, 212, 213, 215, 216, 233, 239, 247, 257, 265, 268, 277, 294. If you cannot obtain the ones you want from any newsdealer, send the price in money or postage stamps by mail to FRANK TOUSEY, PUBLISHER, 24 UNION SQUARE, New York, and you will receive the copies you order by return mail.



# AN IRON-BOUND KEG

OR,

## THE ERROR THAT COST A LIFE

By ALEXANDER ARMSTRONG

### (CHAPTER XIV—Continued)

Ned had gained a slight advantage and meant to keep it, but the dwarf was in a very desperate mood.

The struggle was resumed with redoubted vigor, and they became locked in a tight embrace and rolled over and over upon the floor, straining every muscle.

How the fight might have ended is a mystery, but just as they were in the heat of it the door opened, and into the room ran Grace Greenwood.

She came to a sudden pause, and glanced in affright at the two struggling men.

It was easy to understand the situation.

Her lover was in danger and the dwarf saw her.

She ran up to the men and grasping hold of the hunchback she made a desperate effort to drag him away from the panting detective.

"Let him be! Let him alone!" she cried.

"Grace!" exclaimed Ned, in surprise, as he saw her.

"Yes, it is me! And I came just in time."

Sam was put at a great disadvantage now, and Ned managed to catch hold of him by the throat and fling him over upon the floor.

The dwarf began to get scared, for the provoked officer might put him under arrest for assaulting him.

So he ran for the door and fled from the house. The detective was left alone in the room with the girl, and arising to his feet he saw that she was half fainting.

"Grace," he exclaimed, seating her in a chair, "thank Heaven you came in, for you have perhaps saved my life."

"Oh, Ned, is he gone?" she gasped.

"Yes, he just left the house."

"I wanted to get the antidote for poor Jim O'Hare."

"Have no fear, I will get it for you."

"Good. But what brought you here?"

"I wanted to get my clothing, since I dare not live here now. I did not think he would molest me after the terrible injury he has already done me, so I had no fear of coming in. The noise of your struggle attracted me to this room, and—well, here I am."

"But this medicine you spoke of——"

"Is in a labeled bottle in that rack."

She pointed at a small row of shelves hung on the wall filled with bottles of various sizes and different colors.

"Would you know the stuff by sight?" asked Ned.

"Easily. The bottle is labeled 'Antidote No. 5,' and the stuff is an oily liquid of a pale green color."

The detective went to the rack and looked over the row of bottles carefully in search of the one she asked for.

But he could not find it.

"There is no such bottle here," said he.

"Then Sam must have removed it," replied the girl.

This was exactly the case, and the little wretch had not

been any too quick about it, for he realized that since the detective had heard from Grace of the poison, he might also hear of the antidote.

If Ned got it, he could doctor the drugged detective and restore him his reason, when O'Hare would of course confess how he saw Sam murder the bank burglar.

That would have ended his career in the most abrupt manner, and the result could only have been death.

The detective was thoroughly disgusted.

"He is as sharp as a razor," said he. "And now we may never be able to do anything with Jim."

"Do not despair," said Grace. "Perhaps he has hidden the bottle somewhere. Come, let us search for it."

They hunted around the two rooms, and scoured the rest of the house, and yet nothing was found.

In the cellar Ned examined the hole in the wall, and saw that it had been freshly plastered up.

That told him how the dwarf had made an effort to conceal the evidence of the crime.

Another examination of the ground above the vault showed Ned how he had burrowed straight down through the trap, which had been removed, making him imagine that he had been deluded about the place when he tried to show his discovery to Sam.

Then they went up-stairs.

The girl secured all her clothing, and packed it in a trunk, and the detective called a cab, and had the girl and her possessions taken to her hotel.

Ned then locked up the dwarf's house.

Sam had disappeared.

What had become of him?

Ned resolved to find out, for he wanted to gain some knowledge of what he had done with the iron-bound keg which he had taken to Scotch Plains.

Fortune was favoring Ned Riggs that night, though, for he had hardly turned into Canal street, when he saw Sam Bull slinking along in the shadow of the houses ahead of him.

"I have not lost the trail after all," he muttered.

He glided along after the dwarf, and saw him come to a pause directly in front of a store, the back of which must have been close up to the back of the Hester street house in which the hunchback dwelt.

Ned darted into a hallway.

His wrist pained him where Sam had stabbed him with the lance, and he hastily stuck a piece of courtplaster over the incision, checking the flow of blood.

Then he peered out in quest of the dwarf.

But Sam had vanished.

He must have entered the hall of the house in front of which he paused.

Ned waited a few moments before venturing out after him.



"He is a sly rascal, and must not catch me off my guard!" the detective cogitated. "I'll be mighty wary now."

When he felt sure that it would be safe to venture out he stepped into the street and hurried up to the house in front of which Sam Bull had disappeared.

There was an open hall door ahead of him.

Evidently Sam had gone in there, and Ned ventured within the hall and listened intently.

Not a sound met his ears.

It did not seem dangerous to pursue his investigations further, so he stole back in the hall.

Suddenly the idea of this house's location dawned upon his mind, and he involuntarily muttered:

"I'll bet he is doubling on me."

Ned pursued his idea by going through the hall to the back yard door, which he found standing ajar.

There was a small yard, and a fence divided it from the yard leading to Sam Bull's house.

He stood in the doorway an instant, when he heard footsteps on the stairs of the back stoop of Sam's house, and a moment later he saw the dwarf's head and shoulders emerge up above the line of the fence top.

The hunchback glanced around, and Ned retreated out of sight.

Then Sam unlocked the door with a key, and entered.

The detective felt sure that Sam must have some potent object in view, to return to the house, and as he had the key of the front door, he ran back through the hall to Canal street.

"I'll go around the front way, and head him off," he thought. So he passed through Allen street again, and as he turned the corner, he saw a cab draw up at Sam's door.

The dwarf was just climbing out through the front window, and when he got clear of the house he sprang into the cab, and the horses started off.

Ned ran after the vehicle, and got on behind.

He had not been seen by either Sam or the driver, and now felt sure he could discover what the dwarf was doing.

The vehicle went jolting down to the Jersey City ferry, and went on board of a boat, the detective following on foot.

When the ferryboat was well out in the stream, Ned went past the cab, which stood at the forward part of the gangway, and peered in through a window.

To his amazement he saw nothing of Sam.

"Has he jumped out during the ride to the ferry, and given me the slip?" thought the young officer.

It was hard to decide.

Perhaps he was on the boat yet.

He might have alighted to wait for the boat to reach the Jersey shore, so Ned had to wait to prove one thing or the other, until the boat made a landing.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE LONESOME HUT.

The detective saw no signs of Sam Bull anywhere about the deck, and concluded that if he was on board he had probably concealed himself somewhere, or else might be in either of the gangways or cabins.

Ned did not trouble himself much about the matter, for he simply desired to follow Sam to ascertain where he had concealed the keg, and then to wrest it from him.

So he leaned on the railing, and as not a soul was on the deck to disturb him he fell into a reverie as he leaned his elbows on the railing, and supported his chin in his hands.

The North river was dark.

Stars were twinkling above, but no moon shone down.

The piers were agleam with lanterns and electric lights, and a few boats were passing up and down the stream.

Scarcely any sound but the churning of the paddle-wheels, the stamping of horses, the rattle of the rudder-line blocks, and the continued swash of the waves broke the stillness.

The detective recalled to mind every circumstance of the peculiar case on which he was working.

He thought of the night on which he parted with Jim O'Hare, and how he had next found the old fellow in the Central office fairly demented, and no one knew how came he so.

He thought of all he learned about the counterfeiters, and how they were all arrested.

He thought of the dreadful crime he had unearthed, and every suspicious circumstance that seemed to stamp Sam Bull as the criminal who committed the deed.

He thought of the charge brought against the sweet-tempered girl he loved, and shuddered to imagine that she might perish on the gallows or go to prison for a crime she never committed.

He thought of the confession he had taken from the dead convict, and of the iron-bound keg, the mysterious contents of which he was so anxious to see.

But he thought no more of the retrospect.

For he was hurled into the river.

As he fell through space and turned he saw Sam Bull's evil face glaring over the railing at him, and knew at once then who it was that so suddenly had come up behind him, caught him by the shoulders and shoved him head foremost down into the water.

Then his body struck the waves and he sank.

Not far, though.

When he came up two-thirds of the boat was past him.

The dangerous paddle wheel had gone over the spot where he struck, but his body was too far below the surface to get hit, and yet when he arose the sternmost end of the hull was within arm's reach of him.

He did not lose his wits for an instant, but seeing the cabin and deck braces gliding by over his head, he reached up with a dexterous movement and seized one.

Instantly he was dragged along with the boat.

It brought a strain on his arm, and he hastily lifted the other hand to the brace and caught hold of it.

Then he dragged himself out of the water by sheer strength.

It was an easy matter to swing himself up until he bestrode the brace above the water line.

All along the bottom of the hull, and on a line with his head was a row of small square windows, in some of which lights were gleaming.

He glanced through and observed that they ventilated the engine-room and all the quarters in the hold.

"There's plenty room for me to get through one of those windows," he cogitated; "and I can get up on deck again, no worse off than suffering a good drenching."

One of the windows near him was wide open, and he crept through and found himself in one of the coal bunkers.

A man stood in front of him shoveling the stuff and he uttered a cry of amazement and recoiled as the detective so suddenly made his appearance.

"Hello!" he cried. "Where in thunder did you spring from?"

"The river," said Ned, who tumbled down on the coal.

"I thought you were a ghost."

"But I ain't," said Ned, arising to his feet.

"How the dickens did you chance to be in the river?"

"Fell overboard, but I caught one of the deck braces afterward."



"Queer the paddle wheel didn't hit you."

"Very. It must have passed over my head."

"Well, you're a lucky chap."

"That is just what I think. too."

"You can strip here if you like and wring your clothes dry."

"Thanks. How can I get up on deck?"

"By going up that iron stairway."

"Well, I'll get some of the water out of my clothing then."

He got in a coal bin and quickly wrung out his wet garments, after which he went up to the deck.

The boat had just run into the slip on the New Jersey side when he emerged out on the horses' gangway, and the mooring chains were rattling as the boat was fastened in the slip.

The detective saw Sam Bull's carriage, and he observed that the dwarf was inside as he saw the man's figure moving near one of the windows.

"The brute thinks I'm dead," he muttered, "and will be greatly surprised when I suddenly appear to him alive."

He followed the cab off the boat.

Sam Bull was not going on a train as Ned half expected he would, but he struck off to the right when he got in the city, and the detective swung himself upon the rear straps of the vehicle, and was carried along with it, entirely out of sight of the hunchback.

The carriage left the city, and rolled out in the country going toward Hoboken, but heading for the Palisades.

Within an hour it was in a dense growth of woods that shaded the road it was traversing, and finally came to a pause where a fork of two roads met.

Ned alighted and darted behind a tree.

It was a gloomy spot, the starlight hardly being able to penetrate the dense shrubbery growing overhead.

Sam Bull got out of the carriage.

"Wait for me here," Ned heard him say to the driver.

"How long will you be?"

"Perhaps an hour."

"But you will pay me for my time?"

"Ay, ay, man, and well, too."

"That satisfies me."

"I'll have a load for you to bring back to New York."

"All right. I'm satisfied if the carriage will hold it."

"It is only a keg, but a heavy one."

Ned's heart bounded upon hearing this.

"The keg—then he has it hidden around here," he muttered.

"Very well," said the driver to Sam.

Sam then walked away while the cabman pulled out his pipe, filled, lit it, and commenced to smoke.

Ned went after the hunchback like a shot, for he feared he would lose track of him in the darkness.

Sam pursued the path that led along the top of the palisades, and after a few minutes' walk, he entered a clearing that opened up to the edge of the cliff.

The detective sank behind a tree out of sight.

Sam stood looking off toward the river.

A grand panorama was stretched away before his sight, the silvery river winding along beneath him, hedged on both sides by the two great cities with their myriads of lights.

There was a cool night breeze blowing the fragrance of the fall foliage, and the trees and shrubs echoed and re-echoed with the shrill notes of the insects hidden away beneath the turning leaves.

In back of Sam, and quite near the edge of the cliff, stood a small, dilapidated hut with a broken window, a thatched roof, and a door which swung idly and creakingly to and fro upon its rusty hinges.

That this was the hiding-place of the keg, Ned had not the slightest doubt.

It was a dangerous spot, too, for the hut stood on a tiny

knoll, and the ground shelved abruptly down to the edge of the cliff at an acute descent perilous to walk.

A slip, a slide, a false step, and a man would go hurtling over that dizzy height down, down, down.

The dwarf glanced keenly around.

He saw nothing of the keen-eyed detective.

Then he entered the dilapidated hut, and closed the door.

The detective saw a light flash up inside of the lonesome abode a minute afterward, and he knew that Sam was upon the eve of producing the keg.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE DOCUMENT.

The detective remained in his place of concealment a few minutes, and then made his way amid the trees, in a circle, toward the back of the hut.

There were no windows there.

Consequently Sam Bull could not see him.

When he was on a direct line with the back he emerged from his place of concealment and glided softly toward the hut to gain a view of the interior.

The distance was short, but the detective went slow, as he was obliged to exercise the utmost care not to make the slightest sound that would alarm the hunchback.

He thought there might be some crack or knot-hole in the rough boards through which he could peer, but when he reached it he was disappointed.

The only means he had to gain a view would be to get around to the front next to the door and glance in through the broken window.

Ned was extra cautious that night.

He did not wish any mishap to balk him.

The young detective felt he would not have the slightest difficulty in clearing up a great deal of the mystery that had been enshrouding this case case for so long a time.

He came to the edge of the building and listened.

Sam was moving around inside.

Every foot-fall was plainly audible to Ned.

He heard his enemy growling and grumbling over something, and then he heard a noise as if some boards had been removed and flung down.

Then a silence ensued.

This was followed by a mumbling sound and then a laugh.

"Mine! Ay, ay! Mine once more!" came the tones of Sam.

"It must be the keg!" Ned muttered.

He then ventured around to the front, and his foot suddenly slipped, and he nearly fell down.

He caught the edge of the hut in alarm.

Then he looked around.

The shelving slide leading from the front of the hut to the edge of the cliff met his view.

Had he stepped further, he might have gone rolling over the few intervening feet of space, and been precipitated below.

A thrill of intense horror pervaded him.

He saw what a dangerous predicament he was in.

Moreover, he was disgusted at the little noise he had made, as there was every chance of Sam Bull hearing it.

Listening, he heard no sound in the hut.

This made him suspicious.

Sam must have heard the noise he made, for he had not been very quiet himself an instant before.

Ned listened with all his might.

*(This story to be continued in our next issue.)*



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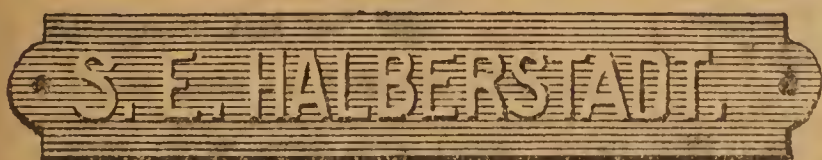
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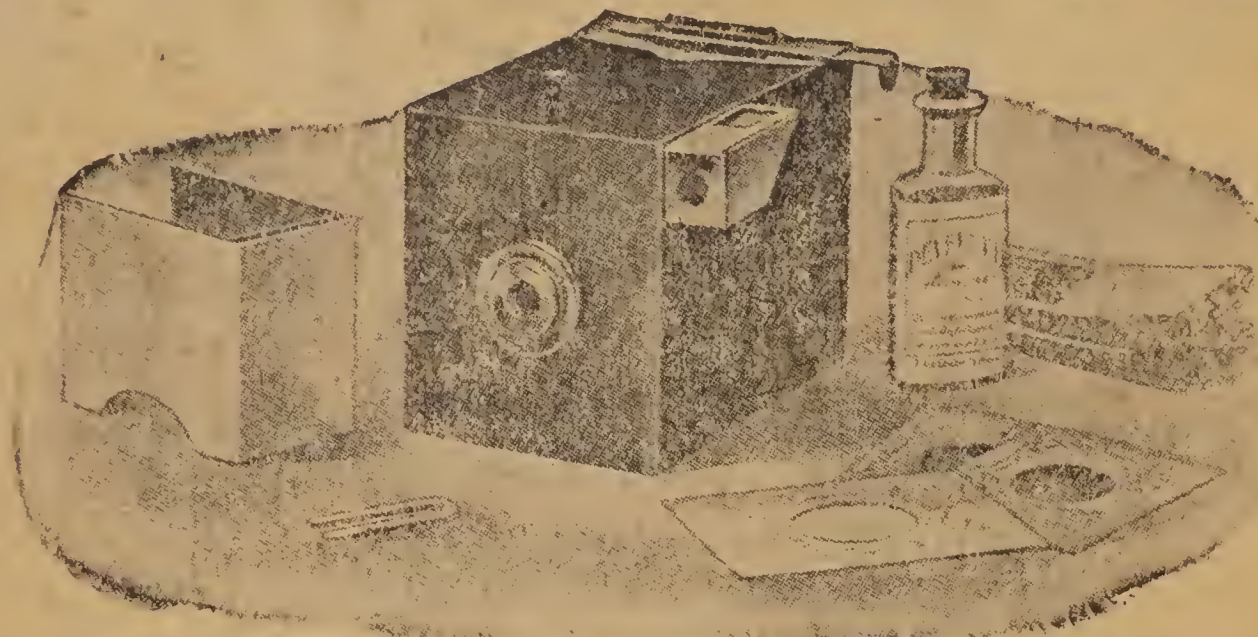


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